FARM LEGENDS.

BY

WILL CARLETON

Chas. A. Robertson

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"THEY STOOD IN THE SHADE OF THE WESTERN DOOR." [*Page* 32.

FARM LEGENDS

By WILL CARLETON

AUTHOR OF "FARM BALLADS"

ILLUSTRATED

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TO

THE MEMORY OF A NOBLEMAN,

MY

FARMER FATHER.

PREFACE.

THE "Farm Ballads" have met with so kind and general a reception as to encourage the publishing of a companion volume.

In this book, also, the author has aimed to give expression to the truth, that with every person, even if humble or debased, there may be some good, worth lifting up and saving; that in each human being, though revered and seemingly immaculate, are some faults which deserve pointing out and correcting; and that all circumstances of life, however trivial they appear, may possess those alternations of the comic and pathetic, the good and bad, the joyful and sorrowful, upon which walk the days and nights, the summers and winters, the lives and deaths, of this strange world.

He would take this occasion to give a word of thanks to those who have staid with him through evil and good report; who have overlooked his literary faults for the sake of the truths he was struggling to tell; and who have believed—what he knows—that he is honest.

With these few words of introduction, the author launches this second bark upon the sea of popular opinion; grinds his axe, and enters once more the great forest of Human Nature, for timber to go on with his boat-building.

W. C.

CONTENTS.

Farm Legends:

Page

The School-master's Guests 17
Three Links of a Life 26
Rob, the Pauper 40
The Three Lovers 51
The Song of Home 63
Paul's run off with the Show 69
The Key to Thomas' Heart 73
The Doctor's Story 76
The Christmas Baby 80

Decoration-Day Poems:

Cover Them Over 87
The Loves of the Nations 92

College Poems:

Rifts in the Cloud 103
Brothers and Friends 113
Our March through the Past 121
That Day we Graduated 131

Poems of Sorrow and Death:

The Burning of Chicago 137
The Railroad Holocaust 145
Ship "City of Boston" 147
Gone Before 149
The Little Sleeper 151
'Tis Snowing 153

Poems of Hope:

Page

Some Time 157
The Good of the Future 160
The Joys that are Left 161
When my Ship went Down 163
To the Carleton Circle 164

The Sanctum King 169

Stray Stanzas:

Lines to James Russell Lowell 185
To Monsieur Pasteur 185
To a Young Lady 186
Death of the Richest Man 186
To the Smothered Miners 186
The Deathless Song 187
On a "Poet"-Critic 187

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE

"*They stood in the Shade of the western Door*" ..... Frontispiece

"*A Class in the Front, with their Readers, were telling, with difficult Pains*" 19

"*And nodded obliquely, and muttered, 'Them 'ere is my Sentiments tew'*" 23

"*When grave Baw Beese, the Indian Chief, had beaded the Neck of the pale-face Miss*" 27

"*Hiding e'en from the Dark his Face*" 35

"*E'en in your Desolation you are not quite unblest*" 37

"*Himself on the Door-stone idly sitting*" 41

"*He runs and stumbles, leaps and clambers*" 45

Rob, the Pauper 50

"*And Bess said, 'Keep still, for there's Plenty of Room'*" 55

"*Several Times he, with Policy stern, repressed a Desire to break out of the Churn*" 57

"*And there his plump Limbs through the Orifice swung*" 59

"*Alice, the country Maiden, with the sweet loving Face*" 65

"*My Boy! come in! come in!*" 71

"*The Mother, who carries the Key to Thomas' Heart*" 74

"*I threw them as far as I could throw*" 78

The Christmas Baby 80, 81, 82, 83

"*They who in Mountain and Hill-side and Dell*" 90

"*And does Columbia love* her *dead?*" 93

"*When a Man throws the Treasures of his Life*" 97

PAGE

"E'en when was fixed, with far-resounding strokes" 109

"How happy are We!" 119

"'Twas a bright, glorious March! full of Joys that were New" . . . 123

"And loudly wild Accents of Terror came pealing from Thousands of Throats" 141

Ship "City of Boston" 147

Some Time 157

"With the World, Flesh, and—Lad of General Work" 171

"The Public Heart's Prime-ministers are We" 179

Farm Legends.

FARM LEGENDS.

THE SCHOOL-MASTER'S GUESTS.

I.

The district school-master was sitting behind his great book-laden desk,
Close-watching the motions of scholars, pathetic and gay and grotesque.

As whisper the half-leafless branches, when Autumn's brisk breezes have come,
His little scrub-thicket of pupils sent upward a half-smothered hum;

Like the frequent sharp bang of a wagon, when treading a forest path o'er,
Resounded the feet of his pupils, whenever their heels struck the floor.

There was little Tom Timms on the front seat, whose face was withstanding a drouth;
And jolly Jack Gibbs just behind him, with a rainy new moon for a mouth;

There were both of the Smith boys, as studious as if they bore names that could bloom:
And Jim Jones, a heaven-built mechanic, the slyest young knave in the room:

With a countenance grave as a horse's, and his honest eyes fixed on a pin,
Queer-bent on a deeply laid project to tunnel Joe Hawkins's skin.

There were anxious young novices, drilling their spelling-books into the brain,
Loud-puffing each half-whispered letter, like an engine just starting a train.

There was one fiercely muscular fellow, who scowled at the sums on his slate,
And leered at the innocent figures a look of unspeakable hate,

And set his white teeth close together, and gave his thin lips a short twist,
As to say, "I could whip you, confound you! if sums could be done with my fist!"

There were two pretty girls in the corner, each one with some cunning possessed,
In a whisper discussing a problem: which one the young master liked best!

A class in the front, with their readers, were telling, with difficult pains,
How perished brave Marco Bozzaris while bleeding at all of his veins;

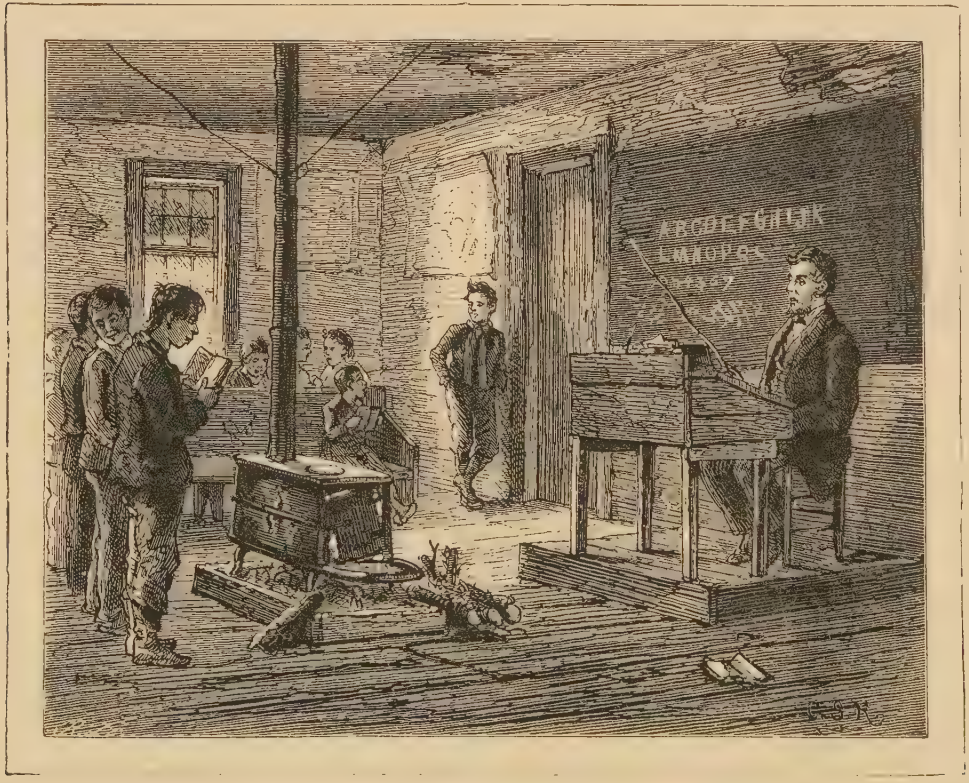
And a boy on the floor to be punished, a statue of idleness stood,
Making faces at all of the others, and enjoying the task all he could.

II.

Around were the walls, gray and dingy, which every old school-sanctum hath,
With many a break on their surface, where grinned a wood-grating of lath;

A patch of thick plaster, just over the school-master's rickety chair,
Seemed threat'ningly o'er him suspended, like Damocles' sword, by a hair;

There were tracks on the desks where the knife-blades had wandered in search of their prey;
Their tops were as duskily spattered as if they drank ink every day;



"A CLASS IN THE FRONT, WITH THEIR READERS, WERE TELLING, WITH DIFFICULT PAINS,
HOW PERISHED BRAVE MARCO BOZZARIS WHILE BLEEDING AT ALL OF HIS VEINS."

The square stove it puffed and it thundered, and broke out in red-flaming sores,
Till the great iron quadruped trembled like a dog fierce to rush out-o'-doors;

White snow-flakes looked in at the windows; the gale pressed its lips to the cracks;
And the children's hot faces were streaming, the while they were freezing their backs.

III.

Now Marco Bozzaris had fallen, and all of his suff'rings were o'er,
And the class to their seats were retreating, when footsteps were heard at the door;

And five of the good district fathers marched into the room in a row,
And stood themselves up by the hot fire, and shook off their white cloaks of snow;

And the spokesman, a grave squire of sixty, with countenance solemnly sad,
Spoke thus, while the children all listened, with all of the ears that they had:

"We've come here, school-master, intendin' to cast an inquirin' eye 'round,
Concarnin' complaints that's been entered, an' fault that has lately been found;
To pace off the width of your doin's, an' witness what you've been about;
An' see if it's payin' to keep you, or whether we'd best turn ye out.

"The first thing I'm bid for to mention is, when the class gets up to read:
You give 'em too tight of a reinin', an' touch 'em up more than they need;
You're nicer than wise in the matter of holdin' the book in one han',
An' you turn a stray *g* in their doin's, an' tack an odd *d* on their *an'*.
There ain't no great good comes of speakin' the words so *polite*, as *I* see,
Providin' you know what the facts is, an' tell 'em off jest as they be.

An' then there's that readin' in corncert, is censured from first unto last;
It kicks up a heap of a racket, when folks is a-travelin' past.
Whatever is done as to readin', providin' things goes to *my* say,
Sha'n't hang on no new-fangled hinges, but swing in the old-fashioned way."

And the other four good district fathers gave quick the consent that was due,
And nodded obliquely, and muttered, "*Them 'ere is my sentiments tew.*"

"Then, as to your spellin': I've heern tell, by them as has looked into this,
That you turn the *u* out o' your labour, an' make the word shorter than 'tis;
An' clip the *k* off o' yer musick, which makes my son Ephraim perplexed,
An' when he spells out as he used ter, you pass the word on to the next.
They say there's some new-grafted books here that don't take them letters along;
But if it is so, just depend on't, them new-grafted books is made wrong.
You might just as well say that Jackson didn't know all there was about war,
As to say that the old-fashioned teachers didn't know what them letters was for!"

And the other four good district fathers gave quick the consent that was due,
And scratched their heads slyly and softly, and said, "*Them's my sentiments tew.*"

"Then, also, your 'rithmetic doin's, as they are reported to me,
Is that you have left Tare an' Tret out, an' also the old Rule o' Three;
An' likewise brought in a new study, some high-steppin' scholars to please,
With saw-bucks an' crosses and pot-hooks, an' *w*'s, *x*, *y*'s, and *z*'s.
We ain't got no time for such foolin'; there ain't no great good to be reached
By tiptoein' childr'n up higher than ever their fathers was teached."

"AND NODDED OBLIQUELY, AND MUTTERED, 'THEM 'ERE IS MY SENTIMENTS TEW.'"

And the other four good district fathers gave quick the consent that was due,
And cocked one eye up to the ceiling, and said, "*Them's my sentiments tew.*"

"Another thing, I must here mention, comes into the question to-day:
Concernin' some words in the grammar you're teachin' our gals for to say.
My gals is as steady as clock-work, an' never give cause for much fear,
But they come home from school t'other evenin' a-talkin' such stuff as this here:
'*I love*,' an' '*Thou lovest*,' an' '*He loves*,' an' '*Ye love*,' an' '*You love*,' an' '*They*—'
An' they answered my questions, 'It's grammar'—'twas all I could get 'em to say.
Now if, 'stead of doin' your duty, you're carryin' matters on so
As to make the gals say that they love you, it's just all that *I* want to know;—"

IV.

Now Jim, the young heaven-built mechanic, in the dusk of the evening before,
Had well-nigh unjointed the stove-pipe, to make it come down on the floor;

And the squire bringing smartly his foot down, as a clincher to what he had said,
A joint of the pipe fell upon him, and larruped him square on the head.

The soot flew in clouds all about him, and blotted with black all the place,
And the squire and the other four fathers were peppered with black in the face.

The school, ever sharp for amusement, laid down all their cumbersome books,
And, spite of the teacher's endeavors, laughed loud at their visitors' looks;

And the squire, as he stalked to the doorway, swore oaths of a violet hue;
And the four district fathers, who followed, seemed to say, "*Them's my sentiments tew.*"

THREE LINKS OF A LIFE.

I.

A WORD went over the hills and plains
Of the scarce-hewn fields that the Tiffin drains,
Through dens of swamps and jungles of trees,
As if it were borne by the buzzing bees
As something sweet for the sons of men;
Or as if the blackbird and the wren
Had lounged about each ragged clearing
To gossip it in the settlers' hearing;
Or the partridge drum-corps of the wood
Had made the word by mortals heard,
And Diana made it understood;
Or the loud-billed hawk of giant sweep
Were told it as something he must keep;

As now, in the half-built city of Lane,
Where the sons of the settlers strive for gain,
Where the Indian trail is graded well,
And the anxious ring of the engine-bell
And the Samson Steam's deep, stuttering word
And the factory's dinner-horn are heard;
Where burghers fight, in friendly guise,
With spears of bargains and shields of lies;
Where the sun-smoked farmer, early a-road,
Rides into the town his high-built load
Of wood or wool, or corn or wheat,
And stables his horses in the street;—
It seems as to each and every one
A deed were known ere it well be done,

"WHEN GRAVE BAW BEESE, THE INDIAN CHIEF,
HAD BEADED THE NECK OF THE PALE-FACE MISS."

As if, in spite of roads or weather,
All minds were whispering together;
So over the glens and rough hill-sides
Of the fruitful land where the Tiffin glides,
Went the startling whisper, clear and plain,
"*There's a new-born baby over at Lane!*"

Now any time, from night till morn,
Or morn till night, for a long time-flight,
Had the patient squaws their children borne;
And many a callow, coppery wight
Had oped his eyes to the tree-flecked light,
And grown to the depths of the woodland dell
And the hunt of the toilsome hills as well
As though at his soul a bow were slung,
And a war-whoop tattooed on his tongue;
But never before, in the Tiffin's sight,
Had a travail bloomed with a blossom of white.

And the fire-tanned logger no longer pressed
His yoke-bound steeds and his furnace fire;
And the gray-linked log-chain drooped to rest,
And a hard face softened with sweet desire;
And the settler-housewife, rudely wise,
With the forest's shrewdness in her eyes,
Yearned, with tenderly wondering brain,
For the new-born baby over at Lane.

And the mother lay in her languid bed,
When the flock of visitors had fled—
When the crowd of settlers all had gone,
And left the young lioness alone
With the tiny cub they had come to see
In the rude-built log menagerie;
When grave Baw Beese, the Indian chief,
As courtly as ever prince in his prime,
Or cavalier of the olden time,
Making his visit kind as brief,
Had beaded the neck of the pale-face miss,

And dimpled her cheek with a farewell kiss;
When the rough-clad room was still as sleek.
Save the deaf old nurse's needle-click,
The beat of the grave clock in its place,
With its ball-tipped tail and owl-like face,
And the iron tea-kettle's droning song
Through its Roman nose so black and long,
The mother lifted her baby's head,
And gave it a clinging kiss, and said:

Why did thou come so straight to me,
Thou queer one?
Thou might have gone where riches be,
Thou dear one!
For when 'twas talked about in heaven,
To whom the sweet soul should be given,
If thou had raised thy pretty voice,
God sure had given to thee a choice,
My dear one, my queer one!

"Babe in the wood" thou surely art,
My lone one:
But thou shalt never play the part,
My own one!
Thou ne'er shalt wander up and down,
With none to claim thee as their own;
Nor shall the Redbreast, as she grieves,
Make up for thee a bed of leaves,
My own one, my lone one!

Although thou be not Riches' flower,
Thou neat one,
Yet thou hast come from Beauty's bower,
Thou sweet one!
Thy every smile's as warm and bright
As if a diamond mocked its light;
Thy every tear's as pure a pearl
As if thy father was an earl,
Thou neat one, thou sweet one!

And thou shalt have a queenly name,
Thou grand one:
A lassie's christening's half her fame,
Thou bland one!
And may thou live so good and true,
The honor will but be thy due;
And friends shall never be ashamed,
Or when or where they hear thee named,
Thou bland one, thou grand one!

E'en like the air—our rule and sport—
Thou meek one,
Thou art my burden and support,
Thou weak one!
Like manna in the wilderness,
A joy hath come to soothe and bless:
But 'tis a sorrow unto me,
To love as I am loving thee,
Thou weak one, thou meek one!

The scarlet-coated child-thief waits,
Thou bright one,
To bear thee through the sky-blue gates,
Thou light one!
His feverish touch thy brow may pain,
And while I to my sad lips strain
The sheath of these bright-beaming eyes,
The blade may flash back to the skies,
Thou light one, thou bright one!

And if thou breast the morning storm,
Thou fair one,
And gird a woman's thrilling form,
Thou rare one:
Sly hounds of sin thy path will trace,
And on thy unsuspecting face
Hot lust will rest its tarnished eyes,
And thou wilt need be worldly-wise,
Thou rare one, thou fair one!

O that the heaven that smiles to-day,
My blest one,
May give thee light to see thy way,
My best one!
That when around thee creeps The Gloom,
The gracious God will call thee home,
And then, increased a hundredfold,
Thou proudly hand Him back His gold,
My best one, my blest one!

II.

A word went over the many miles
Of the well-tilled land where the Tiffin smiles,
And sought no youthful ear in vain:
"*There's a wedding a-coming off at Lane!*"

They stood in the shade of the western door—
Father, mother, and daughter one—
And gazed, as they oft had gazed before,
At the downward glide of the western sun.
The rays of his never-jealous light
Made even the cloud that dimmed him bright;
And lower he bent, and kissed, as he stood,
The lips of the distant blue-eyed wood.

And just as the tired sun bowed his head,
The sun-browned farmer sighed, and said:

And so you'll soon be goin' away,
My darling little Bess;
And you ha' been to the store to-day,
To buy your weddin'-dress;

And so your dear good mother an' I,
Whose love you long have known,
Must lay the light o' your presence by,
And walk the road alone.

So come to-night, with mother and me,
To the porch for an hour or two,
And sit on your old father's knee,
And talk, as we used to do;

For we, who ha' loved you many a year,
And clung to you, strong and true,
Since we've had the young Professor here,
Have not had much of you!

But lovers be lovers, while earth endures;
And once on a time, be it known,
I helped a girl with eyes like yours
Construct a world of our own;

And we laid it out in a garden spot,
And dwelt in the midst of flowers;
Till we found that the world was a good-sized lot,
And most of it wasn't ours!

You're heavier, girl, than when you come
To us one cloudy day,
And seemed to feel so little at home,
We feared you wouldn't stay;

Till I knew the danger was passed, because
You'd struck so mortal a track,
And got so independent an' cross,
God never would let you back!

But who would ever ha' had the whim,
When you lay in my arms an' cried,
You'd some day sit here, pretty an' prim,
A-waitin' to be a bride!

But lovers be lovers, while earth goes on,
And marry, as they ought;
And if you would keep the love you've won,
Remember what you've been taught:

Look first that your wedded lives be true,
With naught from the other apart;
For the flowers of true love never grew
In the soil of a faithless heart.

Look next that the buds of health shall rest
Their blossoms upon your cheek;
For life and love are a burden at best,
If the body be sick and weak.

Look next that your kitchen fire be bright,
And your hands be neat and skilled;
For the love of man oft takes its flight,
If his stomach be not well filled!

Look next that your money is fairly earned,
Ere ever it be spent;
For comfort and love, however turned,
Will ne'er pay six per cent.

And, next, due care and diligence keep
That the mind be trained and fed;
For blessings ever look shabby and cheap,
That light on an empty head.

And if it shall please the gracious God
That children to you belong,
Remember, my child, and spare the rod
Till you've taught them right and wrong;

And show 'em, that though this life's a start
For the better world, no doubt,
Yet earth an' heaven ain't so far apart
As many good folks make out!

III.

A word went over the broad hill-sweeps
Of the listening land where the Tiffin creeps:

"*She married, holding on high her head;*
But the groom was false as the vows he said;
With lies and crimes his days are checked;
The girl is alone, and her life is wrecked."

The midnight rested its heavy arm
Upon the grief-encumbered farm;
And hoarse-voiced Sorrow wandered at will,
Like a moan when the summer's night is still;

"HIDING E'EN FROM THE DARK HIS FACE."

And the spotted cows, with bellies of white,
And well-filled teats all crowded awry,
Stood in the black stalls of the night,
Nor herded nor milked, and wondered why.
And the house was gloomy, still, and cold;
And the hard-palmed farmer, newly old,
Sat in an unfrequented place,
Hiding e'en from the dark his face;
And a solemn silence rested long
On all, save the cricket's dismal song.

But the mother drew the girl to her breast,
And gave to her spirit words of rest:

Come to my lap, my wee-grown baby; rest you upon my knee;
You have been traveling toward the light, and drawing away from me;
You turned your face from my dark path to catch the light o' the sun,
And 'tis no more nor less, my child, than children ever have done.
So you joined hands with one you loved, when we to the cross-road came,
And went your way, as Heaven did say, and who but Heaven to blame?

You must not weep that he you chose was all the time untrue,
Or stab with hate the man whose heart you thought was made for you.
The love God holds for your bright soul is more to get and give
Than all the love of all of the men while He may bid them live.
So let your innocence stanch the wound made by another's guilt;
For Vengeance' blade was ever made with neither guard nor hilt!

Who will avenge you, darling? The sun that shines on high.
He will paint the picture of your wrongs before the great world's eye.
He will look upon your sweet soul, in its pure mantle of white,
Till it shine upon your enemies, and dazzle all their sight.
He'll come each day to point his finger at him who played the knave,
And 'tis denied from him to hide, excepting in the grave.

Who will avenge you, darling? Your sister, the sky above.
Each cloud she floats above you shall be a token of love;
She will bend o'er you at night-fall her pure broad breast of blue,
And every gem that glitters there shall flash a smile to you.
And all her great wide distances to your good name belong;
'Tis not so far from star to star as 'twixt the right and wrong!

Who will avenge you, darling? All the breezes that blow.
They will whisper to each other your tale of guiltless woe;
The perfumes that do load them your innocence shall bless,
And they will soothe your aching brow with pitying, kind caress.
They will sweep away the black veil that hangs about your fame:
There is no cloud that long can shroud a virtuous woman's name.

Who will avenge you, darling? The one who proved untrue.
His memory must undo him, whate'er his will may do;

"E'EN IN YOUR DESOLATION YOU ARE NOT QUITE UNBLEST:
NOT ALL WHO CHOOSE MAY COUNT THEIR WOES UPON A MOTHER'S BREAST."

The pitch-black night will come when he must meet Remorse alone;
He will rush at your avenging as if it were his own.
His every sin is but a knot that yet shall hold him fast;
For guilty hands but twine the strands that fetter them at last.

Lay thee aside thy grief, darling!—lay thee aside thy grief!
And Happiness will cheer thee beyond all thy belief!
As oft as winter comes summer, as sure as night comes day,
And as swift as sorrow cometh, so swift it goeth away!
E'en in your desolation you are not quite unblest:
Not all who choose may count their woes upon a mother's breast.

ROB, THE PAUPER.

I.

Rob, the Pauper, is loose again.
  Through the fields and woods he races.
He shuns the women, he beats the men,
  He kisses the children's frightened faces.
There is no mother he hath not fretted;
There is no child he hath not petted;
There is no house, by road or lane,
He did not tap at the window-pane,
And make more dark the dismal night,
And set the faces within with white.

Rob, the Pauper, is wild of eye,
  Wild of speech, and wild of thinking;
Over his forehead broad and high,
  Each with each wild locks are linking.
Yet, there is something in his bearing
Not quite what a pauper should be wearing:
In every step is a shadow of grace;
The ghost of a beauty haunts his face;
The rags half-sheltering him to-day,
Hang not on him in a beggarly way.

Rob, the Pauper, is crazed of brain:
  The world is a lie to his shattered seeming.
No woman is true unless insane;
  No man but is full of lecherous scheming.
Woe to the wretch, of whate'er calling,
That crouches beneath his cudgel's falling!
Pity the wife, howe'er high-born,
Who wilts beneath his words of scorn!
But youngsters, he caresses as wild
As a mother would kiss a rescued child.

"HIMSELF ON THE DOOR-STONE IDLY SITTING,
A BLONDE-HAIRED WOMAN ABOUT HIM FLITTING."

He hath broke him loose from his poor-house cell;
  He hath dragged him clear from rope and fetter.
They might have thought; for they know full well
  They could keep a half-caged panther better.
Few are the knots so strategy-shunning
That they can escape his maniac cunning;
Many a stout bolt strives in vain
To bar his brawny shoulders' strain;
The strongest men in town agree
That the Pauper is good for any three.

He hath crossed the fields, the woods, the street;
  He hides in the swamp his wasted feature;
The frog leaps over his bleeding feet;
  The turtle crawls from the frightful creature.
The loud mosquito, hungry-flying,
For his impoverished blood is crying;
The scornful hawk's loud screaming sneer
Falls painfully upon his ear;
And close to his unstartled eye,
The rattlesnake creeps noisily by.

He hath fallen into a slough of sleep;
  A haze of the past bends softly o'er him;
His restless spirit a watch doth keep,
  As Memory's canvas glides before him.
Through slumber's distances he travels;
The tangled skein of his mind unravels;
The bright past dawns through a cloud of dreams,
And once again in his prime he seems;
For over his heart's lips, as a kiss,
Sweepeth a vision like to this:

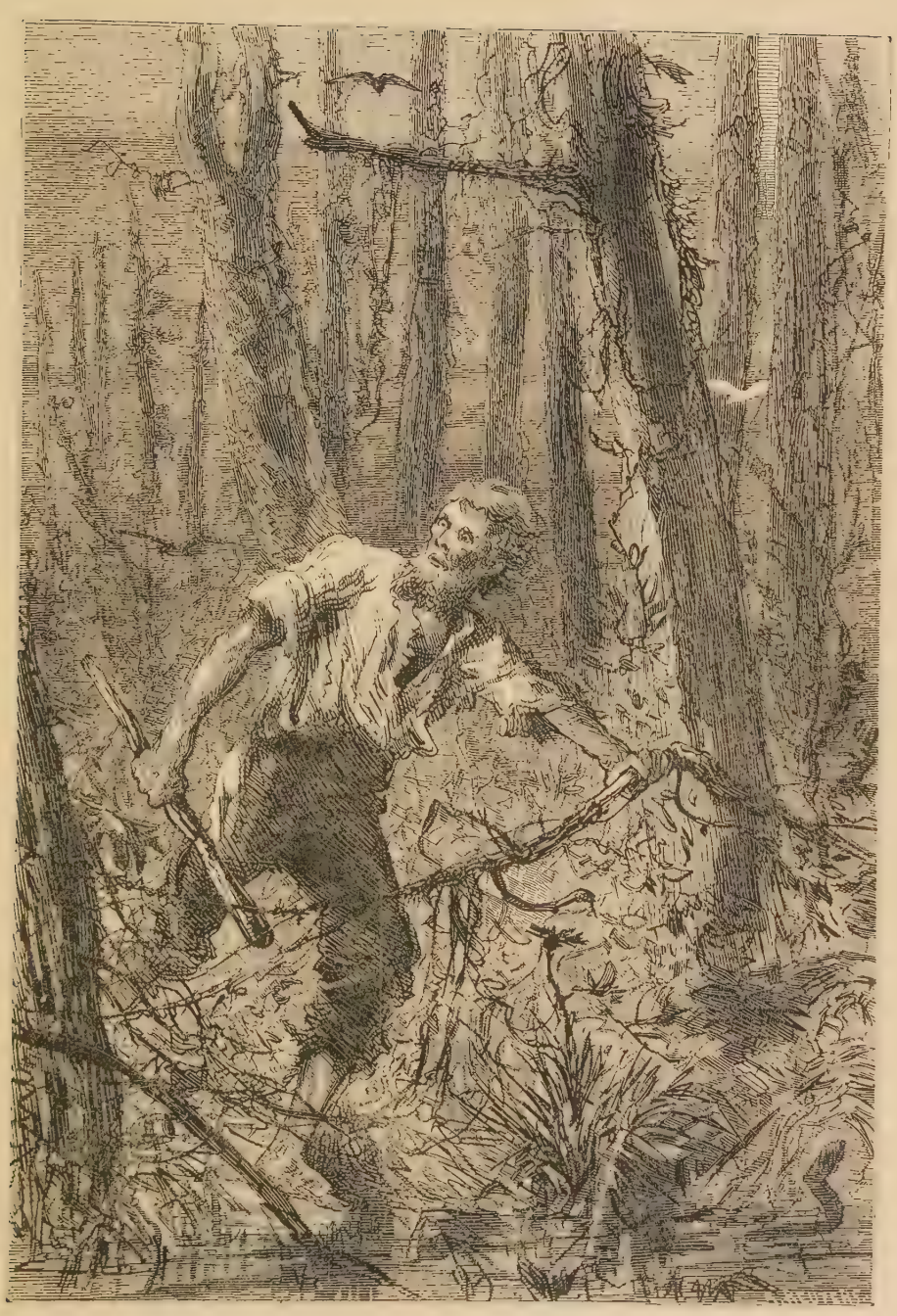
A cozy kitchen, a smooth-cut lawn,
  A zephyr of flowers in the bright air straying;
A graceful child, as fresh as dawn,
  Upon the greensward blithely playing;
Himself on the door-stone idly sitting,
A blonde-haired woman about him flitting.

She dreamily stands beside him there,
And deftly toys with his coal-black hair,
And hovers about him with her eyes,
And whispers to him, pleading-wise:

O Rob, why will you plague my heart? why will you try me so?
Is she so fair, is she so sweet, that you must need desert me?
I saw you kiss her twice and thrice behind the maple row,
And each caress you gave to her did like a dagger hurt me.
Why should for her and for her smiles your heart a moment hunger?
What though her shape be trim as mine, her face a trifle younger?
She does not look so young to you as I when we were wed;
She can not speak more sweet to you than words that I have said;
She can not love you half so well as I, when all is done;
And she is not your wedded wife—the mother of your son.

O Rob, you smile and toss your head; you mock me in your soul;
You say I would be overwise—that I am jealous of you;
And what if my tight-bended heart should spring beyond control?
My jealous tongue but tells the more the zeal with which I love you.
Oh, we might be so peaceful here, with nothing of reproving!
Oh, we might be so happy here, with none to spoil our loving!
Why should a joy be more a joy because, forsooth, 'tis hid?
How can a kiss be more a kiss because it is forbid?
Why should the love you get from her be counted so much gain,
When every smile you give to her but adds unto my pain?

O Rob, you say there is no guilt betwixt the girl and you:
Do you not know how slack of vows may break the bond that's dearest?
You twirl a plaything in your hand, not minding what you do,
And first you know it flies from you, and strikes the one that's nearest.
So do not spoil so hopelessly you ne'er may cease your ruing;
The finger-post of weakened vows points only to undoing.
Remember there are years to come, and there are thorns of woe
That you may grasp if once you let the flowers of true love go;
Remember the increasing bliss of marriage undefiled;
Remember all the pride or shame that waits for yonder child!



"HE RUNS AND STUMBLES, LEAPS AND CLAMBERS,
THROUGH THE DENSE THICKET'S BREATHLESS CHAMBERS."

II.

Rob, the Pauper, awakes and runs;
A clamor cometh clear and clearer.
They are hunting him with dogs and guns;
They are every moment pressing nearer.
Through pits of stagnant pools he pushes,
Through the thick sumac's poison-bushes;
He runs and stumbles, leaps and clambers,
Through the dense thicket's breathless chambers.
The swamp-slime stains at his bloody tread;
The tamarack branches rasp his head;

From bog to bog, and from slough to slough,
He flees, but his foes come yelling nearer;
And ever unto his senses now,
The long-drawn bay of the hounds is clearer.
He is worn and worried, hot and panting;
He staggers at every footstep's planting;
The hot blood races through his brain;
His every breath is a twinge of pain;
Black shadows dance before his eyes;
The echoes mock his agony-cries.

They have hunted him to the open field;
He is falling upon their worn-out mercies.
They loudly call to him to yield;
He hoarsely pays them back in curses.
His blood-shot eye is wildly roaming;
His firm-set mouth with rage is foaming;
He waves his cudgel, with war-cry loud,
And dares the bravest of the crowd.
There springs at his throat a hungry hound;
He dashes its brains into the ground.

Rob, the Pauper, is sorely pressed;
The men are crowding all around him.
He crushes one to a bloody rest,
And breaks again from the crowd that bound him.

The crash of a pistol comes unto him—
A well-sped ball goes crushing through him;
But still he rushes on—yet on—
Until, at last, some distance won,
He mounts a fence with a madman's ease,
And this is something of what he sees:

A lonely cottage, some tangled grass,
  Thickets of thistles, dock, and mullein;
A forest of weeds he scarce can pass,
  A broken chimney, cold and sullen;
Trim housewife-ants, with rush uncertain,
The spider hanging her gauzy curtain.
The Pauper falls on the dusty floor,
And there rings in his failing ear once more
A voice as it might be from the dead,
And says, as it long ago hath said:

O Rob, I have a word to say—a cruel word—to you:
  I can not longer live a lie—the truth for air is calling!
I can not keep the secret locked that long has been your due,
  Not if you strike me to the ground, and spurn me in my falling!
He came to me when first a cloud across your smile was creeping—
He came to me—he brought to me a slighted heart for keeping;
He would not see my angry frown; he sought me, day by day;
I flung at him hot words of scorn, I turned my face away.
I bade him dread my husband's rage when once his words were known:
He smiled at me, and said I had no husband of my own!

O Rob, his words were overtrue! they burned into my brain!
  I could not rub them out again, were I awake or sleeping!
I saw you kiss her twice and thrice—my chidings were in vain—
  And well I knew your wayward heart had wandered from my keeping.
I counted all that was at stake—I bribed my pride with duty;
I knelt before your manly face, in worship of its beauty;
I painted pictures for your eyes you were too blind to see;
I worked at all the trades of love, to earn you back to me;
I threw myself upon your heart; I pleaded long to stay;
I held my hands to you for help—you pushed them both away!

He came to me again; he held his eager love to me—
To me, whose weak and hungry heart deep desolation dreaded!
And I had learned to pity him; but still my will was free,
And once again I threatened him, and warned him I was wedded.
He bade me follow him, and see my erring fancy righted:
We crept along a garden glade by moonbeams dimly lighted;
She silent sat 'mid clustering vines, though much her eyes did speak,
And your black hair was tightly pressed unto her glowing cheek....
It crazed me, but he soothed me sweet with love's unnumbered charms;
I, desolate, turned and threw myself into his desolate arms!

O Rob, you know how little worth, when once a woman slips,
May be the striking down a hand to save herself from falling!
Once more my heart groped for your heart, my tired lips sought your lips:
But 'twas too late—'twas after dark—and you were past recalling.
'Tis hard to claim what once is given; my foe was unrelenting;
Vain were the tempests of my rage, the mists of my repenting.
The night was dark, the storm had come, the fancy-stars of youth
Were covered over by the thick unfading cloud of truth;
So one by one my hopes went back, each hid its pale white face,
Till all was dark, and all was drear, and all was black disgrace.

O Rob, good-by; a solemn one!—'tis till the Judgment-day.
You look about you for the boy? You never more shall see him.
He's crying for his father now full many miles away;
For he is mine—you need not rage—you can not find or free him.
We might have been so peaceful here, with nothing of reproving—
We might have been so happy here, with none to spoil our loving—
As I, a guilty one, might kiss a corpse's waiting brow,
I bend to you where you have fallen, and calmly kiss you now;
As I, a wronged and injured one, might seek escape's glad door,
I wander forth into the world, to enter here no more.

III.

Rob, the Pauper, is lying in state.
In a box of rough-planed boards, unpainted,
He waits at the poor-house grave-yard gate,
For a home by human lust untainted.

They are crowding round and closely peering
At the face of the foe who is past their fearing;
The men lift children up to see
The arms of the man who was good for three;
The women gaze and hold their breath,
For the man looks kingly even in death.

They have gone to their homes anear and far—
  Their joys and griefs, their loves and hating:
Some to sunder the ties that are,
  And some to cooing and wooing and mating.
They will pet and strike, they will strive and blunder,
And leer at their woes with innocent wonder;
They will swiftly sail love's delicate bark,
With never a helm, in the dangerous dark;
They will ne'er quite get it understood
That the Pauper's woes were for their good.

THE THREE LOVERS.

HERE'S a precept, young man, you should follow with care.
If you're courting a girl, court her honest and square.

Mr. 'Liakim Smith was a hard-fisted farmer,
Of moderate wealth,
And immoderate health,
Who fifty-odd years, in a stub-and-twist armor
Of callus and tan,
Had fought like a man
His own dogged progress, through trials and cares,
And log-heaps and brush-heaps and wild-cats and bears,
And agues and fevers and thistles and briers,
Poor kinsmen, rich foemen, false saints, and true liars;
Who oft, like the "man in our town," overwise,
Through the brambles of error had scratched out his eyes,
And when the unwelcome result he had seen,
Had altered his notion,
Reversing the motion,
And scratched them both in again, perfect and clean;
Who had weathered some storms, as a sailor might say,
And tacked to the left and the right of his way,
Till he found himself anchored, past tempests and breakers,
Upon a good farm of a hundred-odd acres.

As for 'Liakim's wife, in four words may be told
Her whole standing in life:
She was 'Liakim's wife.
Whereas she'd been young, she was now growing old,
But did, she considered, as well as one could,
When HE looked on her hard work, and saw that 'twas good.

The family record showed only a daughter;
But she had a face,
As if each fabled Grace
In a burst of delight to her bosom had caught her,
Or as if all the flowers in each Smith generation
Had blossomed at last in one grand culmination.
Style lingered unconscious in all of her dresses;
She'd starlight for glances, and sunbeams for tresses.
Wherever she went, with her right royal tread,
Each youth, when he'd passed her a bit, turned his head;
And so one might say, though the figure be strained,
She had turned half the heads that the township contained

Now Bess had a lover—a monstrous young hulk;
A farmer by trade—
Strong, sturdy, and staid;
A man of good parts—if you counted by bulk;
A man of great weight—by the scales; and, indeed,
A man of some depth—as was shown by his feed.
His face was a fat exclamation of wonder;
His voice was not quite unsuggestive of thunder;
His laugh was a cross 'twixt a yell and a chuckle;
He'd a number one foot,
And a number ten boot,
And a knock-down reserved in each separate knuckle.
He'd a heart mad in love with the girl of his choice,
Who made him alternately mope and rejoice,
By dealing him one day discouraging messes,
And soothing him next day with smiles and caresses.

Now Bess had a lover, who hoped her to wed—
A rising young lawyer—more rising than read;
Whose theories all were quite startling; and who,
Like many a chap
In these days of strange hap,
Was living on what he expected to do;
While his landlady thought 'twould have been rather neat
Could he only have learned,
Till some practice was earned,

To subsist upon what he expected to eat.
He was bodily small, howe'er mentally great,
And suggestively less than a hundred in weight.

Now Bess had a lover—young Patrick; a sinner,
And lad of all work,
From the suburbs of Cork,
Who worked for her father, and thought *he* could win her.
And if Jacob could faithful serve fourteen years through,
And still thrive and rejoice,
For the girl of his choice,
He thought he could play at that game one or two.

Now 'Liakim Smith had a theory hid,
And by egotism fed,
Somewhere up in his head,
That a dutiful daughter should always as bid
Grow old in the service of him who begot her,
Imbibe his beliefs,
Have a care for his griefs,
And faithfully bring him his cider and water.
So, as might be expected, he turned up his nose,
Also a cold shoulder, to Bessie's two beaux;
And finally turned them away from his door,
Forbidding them ever to enter it more;
And detailed young Patrick as kind of a guard,
With orders to keep them both out of the yard.
So Pat took his task, with a treacherous smile,
And bullied the small one,
And dodged the big tall one,
And slyly made love to Miss Bess all the while.

But one evening, when 'Liakim and wife crowned their labors
With praise and entreating
At the village prayer-meeting,
And Patrick had stepped for a while to some neighbor's,
The lawyer had come, in the trimmest of dress,
And, dapper and slim,
And small, e'en for him,

Was holding a session of court with Miss Bess.
And Bess, sly love-athlete, was suited first rate
At a flirtation-mill with this legal light-weight;
And was listening to him, as minutes spun on,
Of pleas he could make,
And of fees he would take,
And of suits that he should, in the future, have won;
When just as the cold, heartless clock counted eight,
Miss Bessie's quick ear caught a step at the gate.
"'Tis mother!" she cried: "oh, go quick, I implore!
But father 'll drive 'round and come in the back-door!
You can not escape them, however you turn!
So hide for a while—let me see—in this churn!"

The churn was quite large enough for him to turn in—
Expanded out so,
By machinery to go,
'Twould have done for a dairy-man-Cyclops to churn in.
'Twas fixed for attaching a pitman or lever,
To go by a horse-power—a notion quite clever,
Invented and built by the Irishman, Pat,
Who pleased Mrs. 'Liakim hugely by that.

The lawyer went into the case with much ease,
And hugged the belief
That the cause would be brief,
And settled himself down with hardly a squeeze.
And Bess said, "Keep still, for there's plenty of room,"
And shut down the cover, and left him in gloom.

But scarcely were matters left decently so,
In walked—not her mother,
But—worry and bother!—
The mammoth young farmer, whose first name was Joe.
And he gleefully sung, in a heavy bass tone,
Which came in one note
From the depths of his throat,
"I'm glad I have come, since I've found you alone.
Let's sit here a while, by this kerosene light,

An' spark it a while now with all of our might."
And Bessie was willing; and so they sat down,
The maiden so fair and the farmer so brown.
They talked of things great, and they talked of things small,

"AND BESS SAID, 'KEEP STILL, FOR THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM,' AND SHUT DOWN THE COVER, AND LEFT HIM IN GLOOM."

Which none could condemn,
And which may have pleased them,
But which did not interest the lawyer at all;
And Bessie seemed giving but little concern
To the feelings of him she had shut in the churn.

Till Bessie just artlessly mentioned the man.
And Joe with a will to abuse him began,
And called him full many an ignoble name,
Appertaining to "Scrubby,"
And "Shorty," and "Stubby,"
And other descriptions not wide of the same;
And Bessie said naught in the lawyer's behalf,
But seconded Joe, now and then, with a laugh;
And the lawyer said nothing, but winked at his fate,
And, somewhat abashed,
And decidedly dashed,
Accepted Joe's motions sans vote or debate.
And several times he, with policy stern,
Repressed a desire to break out of the churn,
Well knowing he thus might get savagely used,
And if not quite eaten,
Would likely be beaten,
And probably injured as well as abused.

But now came another quick step at the door,
And Bessie was fearful, the same as before;
And tumbling Joe over a couple of chairs,
With a general sound
Of thunder all 'round,
She hurried him up a short pair of back-stairs;
And close in the garret condemned him to wait
Till orders from her, be it early or late.
Then tripping her way down the staircase, she said,
"I'll smuggle them off when the folks get to bed."

It was not her parents; 'twas crafty young Pat,
Returned from his visit; and straightway *he* sat
Beside her, remarking, The chairs were in place,
So he would sit near her, and view her sweet face.
So gayly they talked, as the minutes fast flew,
Discussing such matters as both of them knew,
While often Miss Bessie's sweet laugh answered back,
For Pat, be it known,
Had some wit of his own,

And in irony's efforts was sharp as a tack.
And finally Bessie his dancing tongue led,
By a sly dextrous turn,
To the man in the churn,
And the farmer, who eagerly listened o'erhead;
Whereat the young Irishman volubly gave

"SEVERAL TIMES HE, WITH POLICY STERN,
REPRESSED A DESIRE TO BREAK OUT OF THE CHURN."

A short dissertation,
Whose main information
Was that one was a fool, and the other a knave.

Slim chance there must be for the world e'er to learn
How pleasant this was to the man in the churn;

Though, to borrow a figure lent by his position,
He was doubtless in somewhat a worked-up condition.
It ne'er may be sung, and it ne'er may be said,
How well it was liked by the giant o'erhead.
He lay on a joist—for there wasn't any floor—
And the joists were so few,
And so far apart too,
He could not, in comfort, preempt any more;
And he nearly had knocked through the plastering quite,
And challenged young Pat to a fair and square fight;
But he dared not do elsewise than Bessie had said,
For fear, as a lover, he might lose his head.

But now from the meeting the old folks returned,
And sat by the stove as the fire brightly burned;
And Patrick came in from the care of the team;
And since in the house there was overmuch cream,
He thought that the horses their supper might earn,
And leave him full way
To plow early next day,
By working that night for a while at the churn.

The old folks consented; and Patrick went out,
Half chuckling; for he had a shrewd Irish doubt,
From various slight sounds he had chanced to discern,
That Bess had a fellow shut up in that churn.

The lawyer, meanwhile, in his hiding-place cooped,
Low-grunted and hitched and contorted and stooped,
But hung to the place like a man in a dream;
And when the young Irishman went for the team,
To stay or to fly, he could hardly tell which;
But hoping to get
Neatly out of it yet,
He concluded to hang till the very last hitch.

The churn was one side of the house, recollect,
So rods with the horse-power outside could connect;
And Bess stood so near that she took the lamp's gleam in

"AND THERE HIS PLUMP LIMBS THROUGH THE ORIFICE SWUNG."

While her mother was cheerfully pouring the cream in;
Who, being near-sighted, and minding her cup,
Had no notion of what she was covering up;
But the lawyer, meanwhile, had he dared to have spoke,
Would have owned that he saw the whole cream of the joke.

But just as the voice of young Patrick came strong
And clear through the window, "All ready! go 'long!"
And just as the dasher its motion began,
Stirred up by its knocks,
Like a jack-in-the-box
He jumped from his damp, dripping prison—and ran;
And made a frog-leap o'er the stove and a chair,
With some crisp Bible words not intended as prayer.

All over the kitchen he rampaged and tore,
And ran against everything there but the door;
Tipped over old 'Liakim flat on his back,
And left a long trail of rich cream on his track.
"Ou! ou! 'tis a ghost!" quavered 'Liakim's wife;
"A ghost, if I ever saw one in my life!"
"The devil!" roared 'Liakim, rubbing his shin.
"No! no!" shouted Patrick, who just then came in:
"It's only a lawyer: the devil ne'er runs—
To bring on him a laugh—
In the shape of a calf;
It isn't the devil; it's one of his sons!
If so that the spalpeen had words he could utther,
He'd swear he loved Bessie, an' loved no one butther."

Now Joe lay full length on the scantling o'erhead,
And tried to make out
What it all was about,
By list'ning to all that was done and was said;
But somehow his balance became uncontrolled,
And he on the plastering heavily rolled.
It yielded instanter, came down with a crash,
And fell on the heads of the folks with a smash.
And there his plump limbs through the orifice swung,

And he caught by the arms and disgracefully hung,
His ponderous body, so clumsy and thick,
Wedged into that posture as tight as a brick.
And 'Liakim Smith, by amazement made dumb
At those legs in the air
Hanging motionless there,
Concluded that this time the devil had come;
And seizing a chair, he belabored them well,
While the head pronounced words that no printer would spell.

And there let us leave them, 'mid outcry and clatter,
To come to their wits, and then settle the matter;
And take for the moral this inference fair:
If you're courting a girl, court her honest and square.

THE SONG OF HOME.

"SING me a song, my Alice, and let it be your choice,
So as you pipe out plainly, and give me the sweet o' your voice;
An' it be not new-fashioned: the new-made tunes be cold,
An' never awake my fancy like them that's good an' old.
Fie on your high-toned gimcracks, with rests an' beats an' points,
Shaking with trills an' quavers—creakin' in twenty joints!
Sing me the good old tunes, girl, that roll right off the tongue,
Such as your mother gave me when she an' I was young."

So said the Farmer Thompson, smoking his pipe of clay,
Close by his glowing fire-place, at close of a winter day.
He was a lusty fellow, with grizzled beard unshorn,
Hair half combed and flowing, clothing overworn;
Boots of mammoth pattern, with many a patch and rent;
Hands as hard as leather, body with labor bent;
Face of resolution, and lines of pain and care,
Such as the slow world's vanguards are ever doomed to bear;
While from his eyes the yearnings of unemployed desire
Gleamed like the fitful embers of a half-smothered fire.

Alice, the country maiden, with the sweet, loving face,
Sung these words to an old air, with an unstudied grace:

There's nothing like an old tune, when friends are far apart,
To 'mind them of each other, and draw them heart to heart.
New strains across our senses on magic wings may fly,
But there's nothing like an old tune to make the heart beat high.

The scenes we have so oft recalled when once again we view,
Have lost the smile they used to wear, and seem to us untrue;
We gaze upon their faded charms with disappointed eye;
And there's nothing like an old tune to make the heart beat high.

We clasp the hands of former friends—we feel again their kiss—
But something that we loved in them, in sorrow now we miss;
For women fade and men grow cold as years go hurrying by;
And there's nothing like an old tune to make the heart beat high

The forest where we used to roam, we find it swept away;
The cottage where we lived and loved, it moulders to decay;
And all that feeds our hungry hearts may wither, fade, and die;
And there's nothing like an old tune to make the heart beat high.

"That was well sung, my Alice," the farmer proudly said,
When the last strain was finished and the last word had fled;
"That is as true as Gospel; and since you've sung so well,
I'll give you a bit of a story you've never heard me tell.

"When the cry o' the axes first through these parts was heard,
I was young and happy, and chipper as a bird;
Fast as a flock o' pigeons the days appeared to fly,
With no one 'round for a six mile except your mother an' I.
Now we are rich, an' no one except the Lord to thank;
Acres of land all 'round us, money in the bank;
But happiness don't stick by me, an' sunshine ain't so true
As when I was five-an'-twenty, with twice enough to do.

"As for the way your mother an' I made livin' go,
Just some time you ask her—of course she ought to know.
When she comes back in the morning from nursing Rogers' wife,
She'll own she was happy in them days as ever in her life.
For I was sweet on your mother;—why should not I be?
She was the gal I had fought for—she was the world to me;
And since we'd no relations, it never did occur
To me that I was a cent less than all the world to her.

"But it is often doubtful which way a tree may fall;
When you are tol'ble certain, you are not sure at all.
When you are overconscious of travelin' right—that day
Look for a warnin' guide-post that points the other way.
For when you are feeling the safest, it very oft falls out
You rush head-foremost into a big bull-thistle o' doubt.

"'Twas in the fall o' '50 that I set out, one day,
To hunt for deer an' turkey, or what came in my way;

"ALICE, THE COUNTRY MAIDEN, WITH THE SWEET, LOVING FACE,
SUNG THESE WORDS TO AN OLD AIR, WITH AN UNSTUDIED GRACE."

And wanderin' through the forest, my home I did not seek,
Until I was gone from the cabin the better part of a week.

"As Saturday's sun was creeping its western ladder down,
I stopped for a bit of supper at the house of Neighbor Brown.
He was no less my neighbor that he lived ten miles away;
For neighborhoods then was different from what they are to-day.

"Now Mrs. Brown was clever—a good, well-meaning soul—
And brought to time exactly things under her control.
By very few misgoings were her perfections marred;
She meant well, with one trouble—she meant it 'most too hard.

"Now when I had passed the time o' day, and laughed at Brown's last jokes,
Nat'rally I asked 'em if they had seen my folks.
Whereat she shrugged her shoulders quite dangerous-wise,
And looked as if a jury was sittin' in her eyes;
And after a prudent silence I thought would never end,
Asked if my wife had a brother, or cousin, or other friend;
For some one, passing my cabin, she'd heard, had lately found
Rather a sleek an' han'some young fellow hanging round;
Of course it was a brother, or somethin' of that sort?
I told her 'twas a brother, and cut my supper short.

"Which same was wrong, as viewed through a strictly moral eye;
But who, to shield his wife's name, wouldn't sometime tell a lie?
'Twas nothing but a lie, girl, and for a lie 'twas meant:
If brothers sold at a million, she couldn't ha' raised a cent.

"Home I trudged in a hurry—who could that fellow be?
Home I trudged in a hurry, bound that I would see;
And when I reached my cabin I thought 'twas only fair
To peep in at the window an' find out what was there.

"A nice, good-fashioned fellow as any in the land
Sat by my wife quite closely, a-holdin' of her hand,
An' whispering something into her willin'-listenin' ear,
Which I should judge by her actions she rather liked to hear.

"Now seeing such singular doin's before my very eyes,
The Devil he came upon me, and took me by surprise;
He put his hand on my mouth, girl, and never a word I said,
But raised my gun an' aimed it straight at the stranger's head.

"Lightly I touched the trigger; I drew a good long breath—
My heart was full o' Satan, my aim was full o' death;
But at that very instant they broke out, clear an' strong,
A-singing, both together, a good old-fashioned song.

"That simple little song, girl, still in my ears does ring;
'Twas one I had coaxed your mother while courting her to sing;
Never a word I remember how any verses goes,
But this is a little ditty that every body knows:
How though about a palace you might forever hang,
You'll never feel so happy as in your own shebang.

"It woke the recollections of happy days an' years—
I slowly dropped my rifle, an' melted into tears.

* * * * * * *

"It was a neighbor's daughter, made on the tomboy plan,
Who, keeping my wife company, had dressed like a spruce young man!
An' full of new-born praises to Him where they belong,
I thanked the Lord for makin' the man who made that good old song!'

PAUL'S RUN OFF WITH THE SHOW.

JANE, 'tis so—it is so!
How *can* I—his mother—bear it?
Paul's run off with the show!

Put all his things in the garret—
All o' his working gear;
He's never a-going to wear it,
Never again coming here.
If he gets sick, deaf, or blind,
If he falls and breaks his leg,
He can borrow an organ an' grind,
He can hobble about and beg.
Let him run—good luck behind him! . . .
I wonder which way they went?
I suppose I might follow an' find him.—
But no! let him keep to his bent!
I'm never a-going to go
For a boy that runs off with the show!

Lay his books up in the chamber;
He never will want them now;
Never *did* want them much.
He al'ays could run and clamber,
Make somersets on the mow,
Hand-springs, cart-wheels, an' such,
And other profitless turning;
But when it came to learning,
He would always shirk somehow!

I was trimming him out for a preacher,
When he got over being wild

(He was always a sturdy creature—
A sinfully thrifty child);
A Cartwright preacher, perhaps,
As could eat strong boiled dinners,
Talk straight to saucy chaps,
And knock down fightin' sinners;
I told him of all Heaven's mercies,
Raked his sins o'er and o'er,
Made him learn Scripture verses,
Half a thousand or more;
I sung the hymn-book through him.
I whipped the Bible into him,
In grace to make him grow:
What did such training call for?
What did I name him Paul for?—
To have him run off with a show?

All o' the wicked things
That are found in circus rings,
I taught him to abhor 'em;
But he always was crazy for 'em.
I know what such follies be;
For once in my life—woe's me—
Let's see—
'Twas the fall before Paul was born—
I myself was crazy for shows.
How it happened, Goodness knows:
But howe'er it did befall—
Whate'er may ha' been the reason—
For once I went to all
The circuses of the season.
I watched 'em, high an' low,
Painfully try to be jolly;
I laughed at the tricks o' the clown:
I went and saw their folly,
In order to preach it down:
Little enough did I know
That Paul would run off with a show!

What 'll they do with the boy?
They'll stand him upon a horse,
To his exceeding joy,
To teach him to ride, of course.
Sakes! he can do that now!

"MY BOY! COME IN! COME IN!"

He can whip old Jim to a jump,
And ride upon him standing,
And never get a thump—
Never a bit of harm.
He has trained all the beasts on the farm,

From the ducks to the brindle cow,
To follow his commanding.
Sakes! that it should be so!
Him's I've brought up i' the bosom
Of church, and all things good:
All my pains—I shall lose 'em—
Might have known that I would.
I had hopes beyond my countin',
I had faith as big as a mountain;
But somehow I knew all the while
He'd turn out in some such style—
Always had that fear.

Well, he's never comin' back here.
If he comes to any harm,
If he falls an' sprains his arm,
If he slips and breaks his leg,
He can hobble about an' beg.
He can— Who is that boy out there, Jane,
Skulkin' 'long by the railroad track,
Head an' feet all bare, Jane,
One eye dressed in black?

My boy! Come in! come in!
Come in! come in! come in!
Come in—you sha'n't be hurt.
Come in—you shall rest—you shall rest.
Why, you're all over blood an' dirt!
Did they hurt you?—well, well, it's too bad.
So you thought the old home the best?
You won't run off ag'in?
Well, come in, come in, poor lad;
Come in—come in—come in!

THE KEY TO THOMAS' HEART.

RIDE with me, Uncle Nathan? * *
I don't care an' I do.
My poor old heart's in a hurry; I'm anxious to get through.
My soul outwalks my body; my legs are far from strong;
An' it's mighty kind o' you, doctor, to help the old man along.

I'm some'at full o' hustle; there's business to be done.
I've just been out to the village to see my youngest son.
You used to know him, doctor, ere he his age did get,
An' if I ain't mistaken, you sometimes see him yet.

We took him through his boyhood, with never a ground for fears;
But somehow he stumbled over his early manhood's years.
The landmarks that we showed him, he seems to wander from,
Though in his heart there was never a better boy than Tom.

He was quick o' mind an' body in all he done an' said;
But all the gold he reached for, it seemed to turn to lead.
The devil of grog it caught him, an' held him, though the while
He has never grudged his parents a pleasant word an' smile.

The devil of grog it caught him, an' then he turned an' said,
By that which fed from off him, he henceforth would be fed;
An' that which lived upon him, should give him a livin' o'er;
An' so he keeps that groggery that's next to Wilson's store.

But howsoe'er he's wandered, I've al'ays so far heard
That he had a sense of honor, an' never broke his word;
An' his mother, from the good Lord, she says, has understood
That, if he agrees to be sober, he'll keep the promise good.

An' so when just this mornin' these poor old eyes o' mine
Saw all the women round him, a-coaxin' him to sign,
An' when the Widow Adams let fly a homespun prayer,
An' he looked kind o' wild like, an' started unaware,

An' glanced at her an instant, an' then at his kegs o' rum,
I somehow knew in a minute the turnin'-point had come;

"THE MOTHER, WHO CARRIES THE KEY TO THOMAS' HEART."

An' he would be as good a man as ever yet there's been,
Or else let go forever, an' sink in the sea of sin.

An' I knew, whatever efforts might carry him or fail,
There was only one could help God to turn the waverin' scale;
An' I skulked away in a hurry—I was bound to do my part—
To get the mother, who carries the key to Thomas' heart.

She's gettin' old an' feeble, an' childish in her talk;
An' we've no horse an' buggy, an' she will have to walk;
But she would be fast to come, sir, the gracious chance to seize,
If she had to crawl to Thomas upon her hands an' knees.

* * * * * * *

Crawl?—walk? No, not if I know it! So set your mind at rest.
Why, hang it! I'm Tom's customer, and said to be his best!
But if this blooded horse here will show his usual power,
Poor Tom shall see his mother in less than half an hour.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

I.

Good folks ever will have their way—
Good folks ever for it must pay.

But we, who are here and everywhere,
The burden of their faults must bear.

We must shoulder others' shame—
Fight their follies, and take their blame;

Purge the body, and humor the mind;
Doctor the eyes when the soul is blind;

Build the column of health erect
On the quicksands of neglect:

Always shouldering others' shame--
Bearing their faults and taking the blame!

II.

Deacon Rogers, he came to me;
"Wife is agoin' to die," said he.

"Doctors great, an' doctors small,
Haven't improved her any at all.

"Physic and blister, powders and pills,
And nothing sure but the doctors' bills!

"Twenty women, with remedies new,
Bother my wife the whole day through.

"Sweet as honey, or bitter as gall—
Poor old woman, she takes 'em all.

"Sour or sweet, whatever they choose;
Poor old woman, she daren't refuse.

"So she pleases whoe'er may call,
An' Death is suited the best of all.

"Physic and blister, powder an' pill—
Bound to conquer, and sure to kill!"

III.

Mrs. Rogers lay in her bed.
Bandaged and blistered from foot to head.

Blistered and bandaged from head to toe,
Mrs. Rogers was very low.

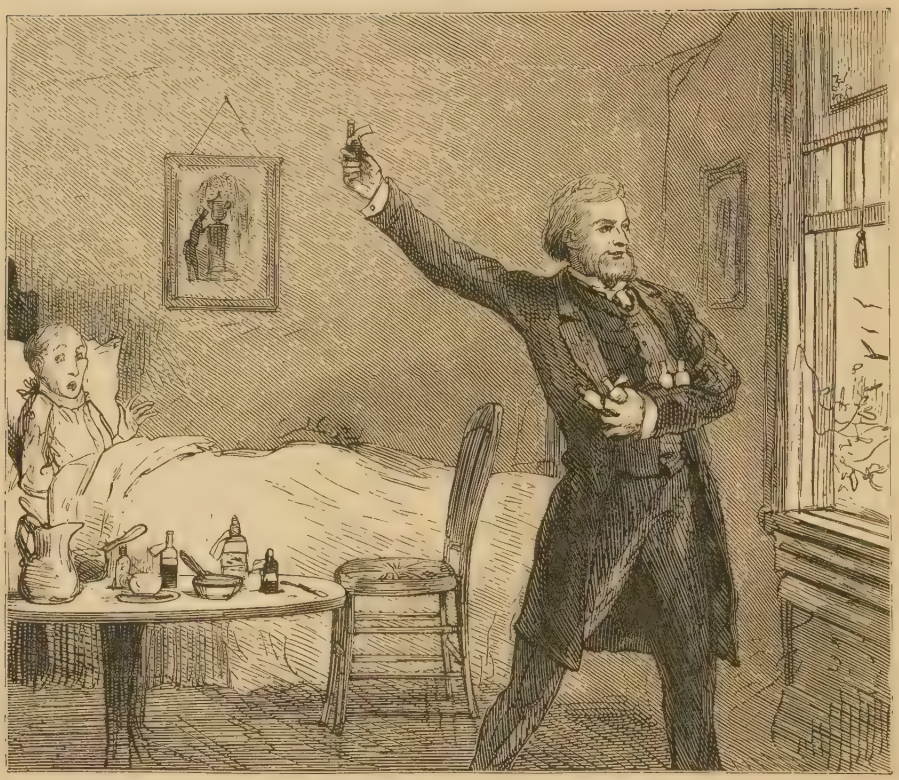
Bottle and saucer, spoon and cup,
On the table stood bravely up;

Physics of high and low degree;
Calomel, catnip, boneset tea;

Every thing a body could bear,
Excepting light and water and air.

IV.

I opened the blinds; the day was bright,
And God gave Mrs. Rogers some light.



"I THREW THEM AS FAR AS I COULD THROW."

I opened the window; the day was fair,
And God gave Mrs. Rogers some air.

Bottles and blisters, powders and pills,
Catnip, boneset, sirups, and squills;

Drugs and medicines, high and low,
I threw them as far as I could throw.

"What are you doing?" my patient cried;
"Frightening Death," I coolly replied.

"You are crazy!" a visitor said:
I flung a bottle at his head.

V.

Deacon Rogers he came to me;
"Wife is a-gettin' her health," said he.

"I really think she will worry through;
She scolds me just as she used to do.

"All the people have poohed an' slurred—
All the neighbors have had their word;

"'Twere better to perish, some of 'em say,
Than be cured in such an irregular way."

VI.

"Your wife," said I, "had God's good care,
And His remedies, light and water and air.

"All of the doctors, beyond a doubt,
Couldn't have cured Mrs. Rogers without."

VII.

The deacon smiled and bowed his head;
"Then your bill is nothing," he said.

"God's be the glory, as you say!
God bless you, doctor! good-day! good-day!"

VIII.

If ever I doctor that woman again,
I'll give her medicine made by men.

THE CHRISTMAS BABY.

"Tha'rt welcome, little bonny brid,
But shouldn't ha' come just when tha' did:
Teimes are bad."
English Ballad.

HOOT! ye little rascal! ye come it on me this way,
Crowdin' yerself amongst us this blusterin' winter's day,
Knowin' that we already have three of ye, an' seven,
An' tryin' to make yerself out a Christmas present o' Heaven?

Ten of ye have we now, Sir, for this world to abuse;
An' Bobbie he have no waistcoat, an' Nellie she have no shoes,
An' Sammie he have no shirt, Sir (I tell it to his shame),
An' the one that was just before ye we ain't had time to name!

An' all o' the banks be smashin', an' on us poor folk fall;
An' Boss he whittles the wages when work's to be had at all;

An' Tom he have cut his foot off, an' lies in a woful plight,
An' all of us wonders at mornin' as what we shall eat at night;

An' but for your father an' Sandy a-findin' somewhat to do,
An' but for the preacher's good wife, who often helps us through
An' but for your poor dear mother a-doin' twice her part,
Ye'd 'a seen us all in heaven afore *ye* was ready to start!

An' now *ye* have come, ye rascal! so healthy an' fat an' sound,
A-weighin', I'll wager a dollar, the full of a dozen pound!
With yer mother's eyes a flashin', yer father's flesh an' build,
An' a good big mouth an' stomach all ready for to be filled!

No, no! don't cry, my baby! hush up, my pretty one!
Don't get my chaff in yer eye, boy—I only was just in fun.
Ye'll like us when ye know us, although we're cur'us folks;
But we don't get much victual, an' half our livin' is jokes!

Why, boy, did ye take me in earnest? come, sit upon my knee;
I'll tell ye a secret, youngster, I'll name ye after me.
Ye shall have all yer brothers an' sisters with ye to play,
An' ye shall have yer carriage, an' ride out every day!

Why, boy, do ye think ye'll suffer? I'm gettin' a trifle old,
But it 'll be many years yet before I lose my hold;
An' if I should fall on the road, boy, still, them's yer brothers, there,
An' not a rogue of 'em ever would see ye harmed a hair!

Say! when ye come from heaven, my little namesake dear,
Did ye see, 'mongst the little girls there, a face like this one here?
That was yer little sister—she died a year ago,
An' all of us cried like babies when they laid her under the snow!

Hang it! if all the rich men I ever see or knew
Came here with all their traps, boy, an' offered 'em for you,
I'd show 'em to the door, Sir, so quick they'd think it odd,
Before I'd sell to another my Christmas gift from God!

Decoration-Day Poems.

COVER THEM OVER.

Cover them over with beautiful flowers;
Deck them with garlands, those brothers of ours;
Lying so silent, by night and by day,
Sleeping the years of their manhood away:
Years they had marked for the joys of the brave;
Years they must waste in the sloth of the grave.
All the bright laurels that promised to bloom
Fell to the earth when they went to the tomb.
Give them the meed they have won in the past;
Give them the honors their merits forecast;
Give them the chaplets they won in the strife;
Give them the laurels they lost with their life.
Cover them over—yes, cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:
Crown in your heart these dead heroes of ours.
And cover them over with beautiful flowers!

Cover the faces that motionless lie,
Shut from the blue of the glorious sky:
Faces once lighted with smiles of the gay—
Faces now marred by the frown of decay.
Eyes that beamed friendship and love to your own;
Lips that sweet thoughts of affection made known;
Brows you have soothed in the day of distress;
Cheeks you have flushed by the tender caress.
Faces that brightened at War's stirring cry;
Faces that streamed when they bade you good-by;
Faces that glowed in the battle's red flame,
Paling for naught, till the Death Angel came.

Cover them over—yes, cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:
Kiss in your hearts these dead heroes of ours,
And cover them over with beautiful flowers!

Cover the hands that are resting, half-tried,
Crossed on the bosom, or low by the side:
Hands to you, mother, in infancy thrown;
Hands that you, father, close hid in your own;
Hands where you, sister, when tried and dismayed,
Hung for protection and counsel and aid;
Hands that you, brother, for faithfulness knew;
Hands that you, wife, wrung in bitter adieu.
Bravely the cross of their country they bore;
Words of devotion they wrote with their gore;
Grandly they grasped for a garland of light,
Catching the mantle of death-darkened night.
Cover them over—yes, cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:
Clasp in your hearts these dead heroes of ours,
And cover them over with beautiful flowers!

Cover the feet that, all weary and torn,
Hither by comrades were tenderly borne:
Feet that have trodden, through love-lighted ways,
Near to your own, in the old happy days;
Feet that have pressed, in Life's opening morn,
Roses of pleasure, and Death's poisoned thorn.
Swiftly they rushed to the help of the right,
Firmly they stood in the shock of the fight.
Ne'er shall the enemy's hurrying tramp
Summon them forth from their death-guarded camp;
Ne'er, till Eternity's bugle shall sound,
Will they come out from their couch in the ground.
Cover them over—yes, cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:
Rough were the paths of those heroes of ours—
Now cover them over with beautiful flowers!

Cover the hearts that have beaten so high,
Beaten with hopes that were born but to die;
Hearts that have burned in the heat of the fray,
Hearts that have yearned for the homes far away;
Hearts that beat high in the charge's loud tramp,
Hearts that low fell in the prison's foul damp.
Once they were swelling with courage and will,
Now they are lying all pulseless and still;
Once they were glowing with friendship and love,
Now the great souls have gone soaring above.
Bravely their blood to the nation they gave,
Then in her bosom they found them a grave.
Cover them over—yes, cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:
Press to your hearts these dead heroes of ours,
And cover them over with beautiful flowers!

One there is, sleeping in yonder low tomb,
Worthy the brightest of flow'rets that bloom.
Weakness of womanhood's life was her part;
Tenderly strong was her generous heart.
Bravely she stood by the sufferer's side,
Checking the pain and the life-bearing tide;
Fighting the swift-sweeping phantom of Death,
Easing the dying man's fluttering breath;
Then, when the strife that had nerved her was o'er,
Calmly she went to where wars are no more.
Voices have blessed her now silent and dumb;
Voices will bless her in long years to come.
Cover her over—yes, cover her over—
Blessings, like angels, around her shall hover;
Cherish the name of that sister of ours,
And cover her over with beautiful flowers!

Cover the thousands who sleep far away—
Sleep where their friends can not find them to-day;
They who in mountain and hill-side and dell
Rest where they wearied, and lie where they fell.

"THEY WHO IN MOUNTAIN AND HILL-SIDE AND DELL
REST WHERE THEY WEARIED, AND LIE WHERE THEY FELL."

Softly the grass-blade creeps round their repose;
Sweetly above them the wild flow'ret blows;
Zephyrs of freedom fly gently o'erhead,
Whispering names for the patriot dead.
So in our minds we will name them once more,
So in our hearts we will cover them o'er;
Roses and lilies and violets blue,
Bloom in our souls for the brave and the true.
Cover them over—yes, cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:

Think of those far-away heroes of ours,
And cover them over with beautiful flowers!

When the long years have crept slowly away,
E'en to the dawn of Earth's funeral day;
When, at the Archangel's trumpet and tread,
Rise up the faces and forms of the dead;
When the great world its last judgment awaits:
When the blue sky shall swing open its gates,
And our long columns march silently through,
Past the Great Captain, for final review;
Then for the blood that has flown for the right,
Crowns shall be given, untarnished and bright;
Then the glad ear of each war-martyred son
Proudly shall hear the good judgment, "Well done."
Blessings for garlands shall cover them over—
Parent, and husband, and brother, and lover:
God will reward those dead heroes of ours,
And cover them over with beautiful flowers!

THE LOVES OF THE NATIONS.

[Read at the Arlington National Cemetery, Decoration Day, 1884.]

I.

The Grecians loved their soldier dead:
They prized the casket, though the pearl had fled.
When he who could be dangerous in the fight,
Had proved his soul's magnificence and might,
But—his poor body vanquished—with a sigh
Had laid him down upon the sands to die,
He vaulted 'mongst the nation's honored sons;
He was the love of all the living ones.
They rallied round a chief when fallen low,
To guard his numb flesh from a hostile blow.
"Rescue the dead!" was then the clarion cry;
"Rescue the dead, for we ourselves must die!"
So, oft they made, before the strife was done,
A dozen corpses more, to rescue one.
When that great agony of muscle, brain,
Heart, soul, tumultuous joy, and frantic pain,
Men call a battle, had been lost and won,
And it was told what side the gods were on,
And o'er the brows of which exhausted band
Proud Victory should press her jewelled hand,
Then from the conquered to the conquering came
A voice that made its way like tongues of flame,
And swift and chivalrous compliance bred:
"Give us a truce, that we may bury our dead!"
Six Grecian generals came from war one day,
All well esteemed, for gallant men were they;
But some one, pointing grimly at them, said,
"They on the field unburied left their dead."

"AND DOES COLUMBIA LOVE *HER* DEAD?"

Then popular rage rose in a fiery flood,
And curled about them, and licked up their blood.
Why did each one fall with dissevered head?
Because the Grecians loved their soldier dead!
A man came running from Thermopylæ,
And said, "'Tis done; they all were slain but me."
Why did his fellow-Spartans sneer and hiss,
Recoil from him, as from a leper's kiss,
And say, "Take back your blood, you craven drone,
And leave it where your comrades lost their own?"
It was because the unhappy man had sped
Away from death, and left his comrades dead.
The Grecian mother, with a tearless eye,
Sent her son warward, with this mandate high:
"Now be this shield your glory or your hearse!
With it you earn my blessing or my curse!
Rather your ashes flecked with sparks of fame,
Than your live body clad in robes of shame!"
Oh yes, the Grecians loved their soldier dead!
Whether beneath the grass-blade's dainty tread,
Or 'mid the funeral pyre's majestic blaze,
They glowed within the living's envied gaze!
Yet not like ours that Grecian love could be:
They did not love the living as do we!

II.

The Romans loved their soldier dead,
And brightest, grandest honors o'er them spread.
That hard, grim nation, which with fierce iron hand
Clasped by the choking throat land after land,
And blood of its own living freely shed,
Grew strangely tender with its warrior dead.
The past was dragged for deeds of might and fame,
To hang in garlands on the golden name;
The magic silver of some gifted tongue
Chaplets of praise above his body flung;
And words fell on the living, listening ear,
The dead might well awaken but to hear.

The flags that he had captured, draped in gloom,
Before him waved — he found them at his tomb;
Sweet flowers, the freshest beauties of a day,
Made a fair garden round the hero's clay;
Great monuments wrote solemnly on high
His glory o'er the blue page of the sky;
And epitaphs, beneath the sparkling name,
Gave to the voiceless dead a tongue of flame.
Who fell with patriotic bravery, knew,
Humble or proud, his deeds would have their due;
Whoe'er with baseness threw his name away,
Knew that, when fall'n, he formed the vulture's prey.
Oh yes, the Romans loved their valiant dead,
The while their living were to victory led!
Swift-sighted Rome! you knew the intense desire
Of men to live when lesser men expire;
Knew how they struggle, e'en with latest breath,
To make their names o'erbridge the gulf of death;
Knew the last rites to one dead hero paid
Would sharpen many a living warrior's blade;
Knew how your victory-accustomed bands
Were waved along by their dead comrades' hands!
Yet not like ours that Roman love could be:
They did not love the living as do we!

III.

And does Columbia love *her* dead?—
No word of praise or honor can be said,
No language has been given to our race,
No monument has majesty or grace,
No music, filling with weird sweets the air,
No maid or matron eloquently fair,
Naught that can feeling to expression wed,
May say how well we love our soldier dead.
If in those days when self was all above,
Men loved so well ere they were taught to love,
What deep affection may be felt and seen
From hearts taught by the love-crowned Nazarene!

"WHEN A MAN THROWS THE TREASURES OF HIS LIFE."

The narrow Tiber creeps through Cæsar's Rome,
The broad Potomac laves our chieftain's home;
The cascades of the Grecians murmur still,
Niagara thunders o'er the Western hill.
So seems it, in this era of heart-lore,
As if our love transcended all before.
In this republic—Giant of Free Lands,
Holding apart the oceans with strong hands—
Has through these years in massive quiet flown
A tide of tender heart-love for its own.
When swirling floods rush through the meadows fair,
And turn them into valleys of despair,
A flood of love sweeps o'er the prosperous hills,
And brings them aid to cure their sudden ills.
When the red fire-king holds his crimson court,
And ruins homes to sate his fiendish sport,
There speeds a flame of pity through the land,
Which opens wide the generous heart and hand.
Love for the worthy living, our hearts' guide;
Love for the worthy dead, his dark-veiled bride.
Love for the living martyrs of the land,
And garlands for the dead, go hand in hand.
So, while we deck the brave ones that are gone,
Our hearts for those who live, beat truly on.
When a man throws the treasures of his life
Into the Land's fierce, self-preserving strife,
Let him be sure, in the world's battles grim,
When war is o'er, the Land will fight for him!
So shall God's blessing mingle with these flowers,
And love of dead and living both be ours;
And benedictions on our hearts be shed;
For they are living, whom we mourn as dead!

College Poems.

RIFTS IN THE CLOUD.

[Graduating Poem, June 17, 1869.]

Life is a cloud—e'en take it as you may;
Illumine it with Pleasure's transient ray;
Brighten its edge with Virtue; let each fold
E'en by the touch of God be flecked with gold,
While angel-wings may kindly hover near,
And angel-voices murmur words of cheer,
Still, life's a cloud, forever hanging nigh,
  Forever o'er our winding pathways spread,
Ready to blacken on some saddened eye,
  And hurl its bolts on some defenseless head!

Yes, there are lives that seem to know no ill;
Paths that seem straight, with naught of thorn or hill.
The bright and glorious sun, each welcome day,
Flashes upon the flowers that deck their way,
And the soft zephyr sings a lullaby,
'Mid rustling trees, to please the ear and eye;
And all the darling child of fortune needs,
And all his dull, half-slumbering caution heeds,
While fairy eyes their watch above him keep,
Is breath to live and weariness to sleep.
But life's a cloud! and soon the smiling sky
  May wear the unwelcome semblance of a frown.
And the fierce tempest, madly rushing by,
  May raise its dripping wings, and strike him down!

When helpless infancy, for love or rest,
Lies nestling to a mother's yearning breast,
While she, enamored of its ways and wiles
As mothers only are, looks down and smiles,

And spies a thousand unsuspected charms
In the sweet babe she presses in her arms,
While he, the love-light kindled in his eyes,
Sends to her own, electrical replies,
A ray of sunshine comes for each caress,
From out the clear blue sky of happiness.
But life's a cloud! and soon the smiling face
The frowns and tears of childish grief may know,
And the love-language of the heart give place
To the wild clamor of a baby's woe.

The days of youth are joyful, in their way;
Bare feet tread lightly, and their steps are gay.
Parental kindness grades the early path,
And shields it from the storm-king's dreaded wrath.
But there are thorns that prick the infant flesh,
And bid the youthful eyes to flow afresh,
Thorns that maturer nerves would never feel,
With wounds that bleed not less, that soon they heal.
When we look back upon our childhood days,
Look down the long and sweetly verdant ways
Wherein we gayly passed the shining hours,
We see the beauty of its blooming flowers,
We breathe its fresh and fragrant air once more,
And, counting all its many pleasures o'er,
And giving them their natural place of chief,
Forget our disappointments and our grief.
Sorrows that now were light, then weighed us down,
And claimed our tears for every surly frown.
For life's a cloud, e'en take it as we will,
The changing wind ne'er banishes or lifts;
The pangs of grief but make it darker still,
And happiness is nothing but its rifts.

There is a joy in sturdy manhood still;
Bravery is joy; and he who says, I WILL,
And turns, with swelling heart, and dares the fates,
While firm resolve upon his purpose waits,

Is happier for the deed; and he whose share
Is honest toil, pits that against dull care.
And yet, in spite of labor, faith, or prayer,
  Dark clouds and fearful o'er our paths are driven:
They take the shape of monsters in the air,
  And almost shut our eager gaze from heaven!

Disease is there, with slimy, loathsome touch,
With hollow, blood-shot eyes and eager clutch,
Longing to strike us down with pangs of pain,
And bind us there, with weakness' galling chain.
Ruin is there, with cunning ambush laid,
Waiting some panic in the ranks of trade,
Some profitless endeavor, or some trust
By recreant knave abused, to snatch the crust
From out the mouths of them we love the best,
And bring gaunt hunger, an unwelcome guest.
Disgrace is there, of honest look bereft,
Truth in his right hand, falsehood in his left,
Pride in his mouth, the devil in his eye,
His garment truth, his cold black heart a lie,
Forging the bolts to blast some honored name;
  Longing to see some victim wronged or wrong;
To see him step into the pool of shame,
  Or soiled by loved ones that to him belong.

A dark cloud hovers over every zone—
The cloud of ignorance. The great unknown,
Defying comprehension, still hangs low
Above our feeble minds. When we who now
Have stumbled 'neath the ever-varying load
That marks the weary student's royal road,
Have hurried over verbs in headlong haste,
And various thorny paths of language traced;
Have run our muddled heads, with rueful sigh,
'Gainst figures truthful, that yet seemed to lie;
Have peeped into the Sciences, and learned
How much we do not know; have bravely turned

Our guns of eloquence on forest trees,
And preached grave doctrines to the wayward breeze;
When we have done all this, the foggy cloud,
With scarce a rift, is still above us bowed;
And we are children, on some garden's verge,
  Groping for flowers the opposing wall beneath,
Who, flushed and breathless, may at last emerge,
  With a few scanty blossoms for a wreath.

But never was a cloud so thick and black,
But it might some time break, and on its track
The glorious sun come streaming. Never, too,
So but its threads might bleach to lighter hue,
Was sorrow's mantle of so deep a dye.
And he who, peering at the troubled sky,
Looks past the clouds, or looks the cloud-rifts through,
  Or, finding none, remembers their great worth,
And strikes them for himself, is that man who
  Shows the completest wisdom of this earth.

When one stands forth in Reason's glorious light,
Stands in his own proud consciousness of right,
Laments his faults, his virtues does not boast,
Studies all creatures—and himself the most—
Knowing the way wherewith his faults to meet,
Or, vanquished by them, owning his defeat,
He pays the penalty as should true men,
And pitches battle with the foe again;
When, giving all their proper due and heed,
He yet has power, when such shall be the need,
To go his way, unshackled, true, and free,
And bid the world go hanged, if needs must be.
He strikes a rift for his unfearing eye
Through the black cloud of low servility:
A cloud that's decked the Orient all these years;
'Neath whose low-bending folds, 'mid groans and tears,
Priestcraft has heaped its huge, ill-gotten gains,
And tyrants forged their bloody, clanking chains;

A cloud, that when the *Mayflower's* precious cup
The misty, treacherous deep held proudly up,
By waves that leaped and dashed each other o'er,
But onward still the ark of Freedom bore,
Some fair and peaceful Ararat to find,
Plumed its black wings, and swept not far behind.
To-day it lowers o'er this great, free land—
O'er farms and workshops, offices and spires—
Its baleful shadow casts on every hand,
And darkens Church and State and household fires.

It is a thing to pity and to blame,
A useless, vile, humiliating shame,
A silent slander on the Heaven-born soul,
Decked with the signet of its own control,
A flaw upon the image of our God,
When men, obedient to some Mogul's nod—
When men, the sockets of whose addled brains
Are blessed with some illuminate remains
Wherefrom the glim of reason still is shed,
Blow out the light, and send their wits to bed;
And, taking as their sole dictator, then.
Some little, thundering god of speech or pen,
Aping submissively the smile or frown
Of some great brazen face that beats them down,
Or silenced by some lubricated tongue,
Covered with borrowed words and neatly hung—
They yield their judgments up to others' wills,
And take grave creeds like sugar-coated pills;
And, with their weakness tacitly confessed,
Like the unfeathered fledgelings of a nest,
When the old bird comes home with worms and flies—
With half a smile and half a knowing frown,
They open wide their mouths, and shut their eyes,
And seem to murmur softly, "*Drop it down.*"

He who will creep about some great man's feet,
The honeyed fragrance of his breath to meet,

Or follow him about, with crafty plan,
And cringe for smiles and favors, is no man.
A fraction of a man, and all his own,
Although his numerator be but one,
With unity divided up so fine
That thousands range themselves beneath the line—
Ay, one so insignificantly small
That quick accountants count him not at all—
Is better far, and vastly nobler, too,
  Than some great swelling cipher among men,
Naught of itself, and nothing else to do
  Except to help some little one count ten!

Let us e'en strike, with courage true endowed,
Straight at the centre of this murky cloud,
And sweep its worthless vapor from the earth.
Take sense for coin; opinions at their worth;
Conviction at its cost; dictation, when
Our minds and souls are bankrupt—hardly then!
When Freedom's sons and daughters will do this,
Our land will know a day of happiness,
Fit for such joy as never yet was seen,
E'en when Emancipation tried her keen
Bright blade upon the galling chains of steel,
And stamped the action with the nation's seal.
E'en when the cable its initial spark
Brought flashing through the ocean's deep and dark;
E'en when was fixed, with far-resounding strokes,
  With song, and praise, and thankfulness, and mirth,
The golden fastening of the chain that yokes
  The two great restless oceans of the earth!

But over all, and round about us spread,
Hangs the black cloud of Death: a thunder-head,
Yet ominously silent; moving on,
  While from its threatening folds, so deep and dark,
The forkèd lightning, ever and anon,
  Shoots for some life, and never fails its mark.

"E'EN WHEN WAS FIXED, WITH FAR-RESOUNDING STROKES."

There was one classmate is not here to-day;
Many an oak is blasted on its way,
Many a growing hope is overthrown.
What might have been, his early growth had shown,
What was, our love and tears for him may tell;
He lived, he toiled, he faded, and he fell.
When our friend lay within that narrow room
Men call a coffin—in its cheerless gloom
Himself the only tenant, and asleep
In a long slumber, terrible and deep;
When at the open door his pale, sad face
Appeared to us, without a look or trace
Of recognition in its ghastly hue,
Soon to be hid forever from our view;
When, with his sightless eyes to heaven upturned,
Wherefrom his royal soul upon them burned,
He waited for his last rites to be said,
With the pathetic patience of the dead;
When tenderly his manly form we lay
In its last couch, with covering of clay;
Who in that mournful duty had a part,
But felt the cloud of Death upon his heart?
But when we thought how his unfettered soul,
Free from his poor sick body's weak control,
Pluming its wings at the Eternal throne,
  Might take through realms of space its rapid flight,
And find a million joys to us unknown,
  The cloud was rifted by a ray of light.

Old class of '69! together, still,
We've journeyed up the rough and toilsome hill;
Seeking the gems to labor ne'er denied,
Plucking the fruits that deck the mountain-side.
Now, in the glory of this summer day,
We part, and each one goes his different way.
Let each, with hope to fire his yearning soul,
Still hurry onward to the shining goal.
The way at times may dark and weary seem,
No ray of sunshine on our path may beam,

The dark clouds hover o'er us like a pall,
And gloom and sadness seem to compass all;
But still, with honest purpose, toil we on;
  And if our steps be upright, straight, and true.
Far in the east a golden light shall dawn,
  And the bright smile of God come bursting through.

BROTHERS AND FRIENDS.

[Reunion of Αδελφοι και φιλοι Society, June 16, 1875.]

Would I might utter all my heart can feel!
But there are thoughts weak words will not reveal;
The rarest fruitage is the last to fall;
The strongest language hath no words at all.

When first the uncouth student comes in sight—
A sturdy plant, just struggling toward the light—
And timidly invades his classic home,
And gazes at the high-perched college dome,
Striving, through eyes with a vague yearning dim,
To spy some future glory there for him,
A child in thought, a man in strong desire,
A clod of clay, vexed by a restless fire,

When, homesick, heart-sick, tired, and desolate,
He leans himself 'gainst Learning's iron gate,
While all the future frowns upon his track,
And all the past conspires to pull him back;
When, with tired resolution in his looks,
He bends above the cabalistic books,
And strives, with knitted forehead throbbing hot,
To learn what older students have forgot;
And wonders how the Romans and the Greeks
Could cry aloud and spare their jaws and cheeks;
And wants the Algebraic author put
On an equation, tied there, head and foot,

Which then, with all Reduction's boasted strength,
May be expanded to prodigious length;
When he reflects, with rueful, pain-worn phiz,
What a sad, melancholy dog he is,
And how much less unhappy and forlorn
Are all those students who are not yet born;
When Inexperience like a worm is twined
Around the clumsy fingers of his mind,
And Discipline, a stranger yet unknown,
Struts grandly by and leaves him all alone;
What cheers him better than to feel and see
Some other one as badly off as he?
Or the sincere advice and kindly aid
Of those well versed in Study's curious trade?
What help such solace and improvement lends
As the hand-grasp of Brothers and of Friends?

When, with a wildly ominous halloo,
The frisky Freshman shuffles into view,
And shouts aloud the war-cry of his clan,
And makes friends with the devil like a man;
When, looking upward at the other classes,
He dubs them as three tandem-teams of asses,
And, scarcely knowing what he does it for,
Vows against them unmitigated war,
And aims to show them that though they may tread
In stately, grand procession o'er his head,
The animated pathway that they scorn,
May sometimes bristle with a hidden thorn;
When, with a vigilance that to nothing yields,
He scans the fruitage of the neighboring fields,
And in the solemn night-time doth entwine
Affection's fingers round the melon-vine;
When the tired wagon from its sheltering shed
To strange, uncouth localities is led,
And, with the night for a dissecting-room,
Is analyzed amid the friendly gloom;
When the hushed rooster, cheated of his cry,
From his spoiled perch bids this vain world good-bye;

When, in the chapel, an unwilling guest,
And living sacrifice, a cow doth rest;
When from the tower, the bell's notes, pealing down,
Rouse up the fireman from the sleeping town,
Who, rushing to the scene, with duty fired,
Finds his well-meant assistance unrequired,
And, creeping homeward, steadily doth play
Upon the third commandment all the way;
When are fired off, with mirth-directed aims,
At the staid Alma Mater, various games,
As feline juveniles themselves regale
In the lithe folds of the maternal tail,
And when these antics have gone far enough,
Comes from her paw a well-considered cuff,
What more to soothe the chastened spirit tends
Than sympathy from Brothers and from Friends?

When the deep Sophomore has just begun
The study of his merits, one by one,
And found that he, a bright scholastic blade,
Is fearfully and wonderfully made;
Discovers how much greater is his share
Of genius than he was at first aware;
When, with a ken beyond his tender age,
He sweeps o'er History's closely printed page,
Conjecturing how this world so long endured,
With his co-operation unsecured;
When, with his geometrical survey
Trigonometrically brought in play,
He scans two points, with firm, unmoved design
To join them sooner than by one straight line;
When he, with oratoric hand astir,
Rolls back the tide of ages—as it were;
When Cicero he decides for reading fit,
And tolerates happy Horace for his wit;
When he across Zoölogy takes sight,
To see what creatures were created right,
And looks the plants that heaven has fashioned through,
To see if they were rightly finished, too;

When he his aid to any cause can lend,
In readiness, on short notice, to ascend
From any well-worn point, secure and soon,
In his small oratorical balloon,
Expecting, when his high trip's end appears,
Descent upon a parachute of cheers;
When he decides, beneath a load of care,
What whiskered monogram his face shall wear;
When, from his mind's high shoulders cropping out,
Linguistic feathers constantly do sprout,
Which, ere they meet the cool outsider's scoff,
Require a quiet, friendly picking-off;
What better to this healthy process lends,
Than the critiques of Brothers and of Friends?

When the spruce Junior, not disposed to shirk,
Begins to get down fairly to his work,
Strives to run foremost in the college race,
Or at least fill a creditable place;
When he bears, o'er the rough and hard highway,
The heat and burden of the college day,
And hastes—his mental lungs all out of breath—
As if it were a race of life and death;
When with some little doubt his brain is fraught,
That he's not quite so brilliant as he thought,
And he would strengthen his lame talent still,
By wrapping 'round the bandage of his will;
When, undergoing the reaction drear
That follows up the Sophomoric year,
He finds each task much harder than before,
And tarries long at every phrase's door,
And pauses o'er his dull oration's page,
Then tears it into pieces in a rage;
When, had he fifty ink-stands, he could throw
Each at some devil fraught with fancied woe;
And when, perchance, atop of all this gloom,
In his heart's world there's yet sufficient room
For Cupid to come blundering through the dark,
And make his sensibilities a mark,

And, viewing each the other from afar,
Learning and Love frown dolefully, and spar;
What for his trouble-phantoms makes amends
Like the support of Brothers and of Friends?

When, with a strengthened soul and chastened brain,
The Senior who has labored not in vain
Looks back upon the four eventful years
To see if any fruitfulness appears,
When he stands, somewhat shadowed by remorse,
In the bright Indian Summer of the course,
And muses, had each opportunity
Been seized, how smooth his present path might be;
When, having blundered through each college hall,
Bumping his head 'gainst Inexperience' wall,
There burst upon him through the window-panes,
Broad Knowledge' deep ravines and fertile plains;
When, standing at the door, with gaze of doubt,
He draws on his world-wrappings, and looks out
Into the chillness of the winter's day,
And almost wishes that he still might stay,
What nearer to his beating heart extends,
Than parting with his Brothers and his Friends?

When he at last has bid the school good-by,
And finds that many matters go awry;
Finds much amid Earth's uncongenial fog,
Not mentioned in the college catalogue;
Finds that The World, in writing his name down,
Forgets, somehow, to add the letters on
Which serve to make his fellow-mortals see
How little rests behind a big degree;
Finds, also, that it is inclined to speak
Elsewise than in the Latin or the Greek;
Finds that the sharp blade of his brightened mind
Gets dulled upon the pachydermal kind;
That The World by Declension understands
The sliding-down of houses, stocks, and lands;

And that Translation means, in this world's bother,
Translation from one pocket to another;
Mistrusts that if The World has, as is sung,
A tail by which, perchance, it may be "slung,"
The blessed place so many hands infold,
He can not find whereon he may take hold;
Finds that he best makes ground o'er this world's road,
As he his college nonsense doth unload;
What sweeter sound with Life's alarum blends
Than the kind voice of Brothers and of Friends?

* * * * * * *

And so, to-day, we live our old lives o'er—
The Freshman gay, the smiling Sophomore,
The anxious Junior, and the Senior proud,
The care-immersed Alumnus, sober-browed;
To shake once more the quick-responding hand,
To trade in jokes no others understand;
Our fish-lines into Memory's ponds to throw
For stories which were left there long ago
(Which, like most fishy ventures, as is known,
Through many changing years have bred and grown);
To beat the big drum of our vanity,
To clash the cymbals of our boisterous glee;
To bind again the old-time friendships fast,
To fight once more the battles of the past.

Beneath the blue of this clear sunlit sky,
Beneath the storm-cloud, rudely lingering nigh,
From night to night—from changing day to day—
Our grand Society has won its way.
And as the lichen plant, when tempest-torn,
And roughly from its native hill-side borne,
Sucks moisture from the whirlwind's shivering form,
And grows, while yet hurled onward by the storm,
And when at last its voyage well is o'er,
Thrives sweeter, purer, stronger than before,
Our gallant little band has ever grown
Stronger for all the struggles it has known;
And, 'mid the smiles and frowns that heaven out-sends,
Our hearts still beat as Brothers and as Friends.

"HOW HAPPY ARE WE!"

OUR MARCH THROUGH THE PAST.

[Alumni Reunion—1885.]

When the tints of the morning had turned into gray,
And the sun of our lives fast was finding its day,
When we stood on that line where youth's journey was done,
And our manhood and womanhood scarce had begun,
When the word was no longer "How happy are we!"
But "What can we suffer, and conquer, and *be?*"
When the prairies of youth, with fresh flowers covered o'er,
And all shaded with groves, were our playgrounds no more;
And mountains stepped into the mist, from afar,
And over the highest one's top, gleamed a star,
'Twas whispered to us, "If those heights you ascend,
Much training its aid to your forces must lend;
Ere you in the future the conflict have won,
You must know what the minds of past ages have done."
Then the old Alma Mater, with welcoming sign,
Said, "That's what *I'm* for; students, fall into line!"
And with hearts still at home, but with eyes forward cast,
We started away on our march through the past.

'Twas a long, weary march! full of toil and of pain;
There were curbings of body, and lashings of brain;
There were sinkings of heart, fraught with agony dire;
There were roads we must walk full of thorns and of fire.
For if he who much strength with the body would gain,
Must clamber his way through fatigue and through pain,
Then he who would mental efficiency find,
Must suffer and strive with the nerves of the mind.
If we turned all these woes in the quartz-mill of truth,
And crushed out the gold from the woes of our youth,

If we knew that all pain, when 'tis wisely endured,
Will be paid for ten times, and the wound neatly cured,
Then we gathered rich profits that doubtless will last
Through ages to come—in our march through the past.

'Twas a bright, glorious march! full of joys that were new;
Of hopes that kept budding, and friends that kept true;
And powers just awaking and op'ning their eyes,
That dashed through our souls with a thrill of surprise;
Of facts 'twas a luxury just to possess;
Of growth that was full of the fire of success.
To you who now fret under college control,
Keep this truth in your mind—let it call on your soul:
You never will find, through terrestrial source,
A pathway more smooth than the old college course.
In spite of the foes that may lie in the way,
In spite of the clouds that may blot the best day,
In spite of the gibes ignoramuses throw forth,
In spite of the cares of the world, flesh, etc.,
There's nothing you'll find, tho' you live a long while,
That will show you so many sweet flowers to the mile,
Though running through some woeful weeds on the way,
As this same college course you are taking to-day.
When, nearing Death-station, on life's crooked track,
You scan your time-table, and take a look back
O'er all of the different stations you've passed,
You'll own, as you trundle along to the last,
That nothing will strike you with such pleasant force,
As that time that you spent in the old college course!
You will find that it lighted your life, all the way,
And gave you material for effort, each day;
That you traveled much freer, for the luggage amassed
In the work-checkered days of your march through the past.

'Twas a bonnie October, as autumn months go,
From our camp on the tolerably placid St. Jo.,
We shouldered our—books, for grim heroism's home,
For sweet, wicked, charming, licentious old Rome!

"'TWAS A BRIGHT, GLORIOUS MARCH! FULL OF JOYS THAT WERE NEW."

And ere the last month of our journey was through,
What picturesque characters came to our view!
Came Cicero, full of extremes good and bad;
The only great orator Rome ever had!
Philosopher, statesman, attorney, he rose
The higher for each of his enemies' blows!
A lesson to halt not that foes be appeased,
And not to turn back when some fools are displeased.
Keep on, with what light heaven will lend to your eyes;
If fools call you fool, 'tis a sign you are wise.
Came Livy, who, when we approached him, first fired
A volley of Preface, that made us all tired;
Describer of Rome, both as glorious and base,
With mod'rate correctness, and infinite grace;
Who told how a wolf, in her blood-spattered home,
Took charge of the two city fathers of Rome;
How Remus resigned, from some reasons of weight,
And Romulus seemed to endure it, "first-rate;"
How his guests from the Sabines escaped with their lives,
But left all their best-looking daughters for wives
(Let this be a warning, by fathers e'er carried;
Keep daughters from school if you don't want them married!);
Yes, what characters old, and yet startlingly new,
Did that same historian pilot us to!
Came Hannibal, trapper of Romans; whose might
Put even the courage of heroes to flight!
Unhelped by his own, and not conquered e'en then,
Till the sun was eclipsed and made cowards his men;
Yet even, when *down*—full of age and neglect—
His enemies feared him, and gave him respect!
Came brave, grand Horatius, who kept bridge one day,
And took bloody toll from whoe'er came that way;
Then swam back in triumph—the pride of all nations—
And hero of—several school declamations!
If we used these fierce stories our courage to feed,
And learned that Resolve is the master of need,
If we made up our minds that success is a prize
That under the rubbish of hard labor lies,

That like Rome, with its victory-banners unfurled,
We would fight till we conquered our share of the world,
But unlike old Rome, we would *not* settle down,
And let Sloth and Luxury tarnish our crown,
Then we gained o'er ourselves a good influence vast,
From that savage old land—in our march through the past.

What country is this, that looms brightly to me,
Washed well by the waves of the Ægean sea?
'Tis the land where blind Homer, with harp of pure gold,
Sang stories that never will cease to be told;
Where Socrates, keeping an unruffled face,
Took his cup of cold poison, with infinite grace;
Where brave old Leonidas glory achieved,
Was at home in Thermopylae's pass, and received;
Who to eloquence threw all a hero could give,
And died—that a thousand orations might live!
Where youthful Demosthenes, famous to be,
With pebbles for troches, harangued the whole sea;
While only himself and the wild breezes heard,
And the ocean, though masculine, got the last word;
How bad old Ulysses, on water and land,
Showed how an old robber could even be grand;
Where grim old Diogenes comfort defied,
And lived—a tub full of the meanest of pride;
Who flattered himself he had no one to thank,
And earned—though received not—the name of a crank;
And other old worthies, and unworthies, too,
Whose sorrows and joys will forever be new.
If these and their motives we struggled to reach,
And studied their natures, as well as their speech,
If we went through those mines of thought-silver and gold,
That seldom run barren and never grow old,
Took what we could carry, and held to it fast,
Then a good growing time, was our march through the past!

What country is this? where some strange-looking men
Make odd-looking figures with pencil and pen;

The ghost of old Daboll stalks grimly about;
And this one is Greenleaf—now, Thomson steps out;
Charles Davies has come, arm-and-arm with Bourdon,
While Robinson, Loomis, and others crowd on.
Conundrums they offer; strange riddles they state;
And set each poor wretch to maltreating his slate.
How the hands of a clock meet at high twelve—and then,
When will that old time-piece its fists clench again?
How two famous trav'lers, who never have met,
Set out for some place (and have not arrived yet!);
How a man had three sons: to the first one he gave
One-third of what he from the others could save;
The others both shared, in a figurative way
(Those boys haven't a cent of their cash to this day!);
How a person had four casks: the first of which, filled
From the second, left four-sevenths of what was not spilled
(I always stopped right in the midst of my tasks,
To guess at the taste of the stuff in those casks);
How a man had ten daughters: the first one's age reckoned
Three-fourths of eight-ninths of nine-tenths of the second;
Numbers 3, 4, and 5, also 6, 7, and 8,
Used also in problems their ages to state;
The other two, being quite chickens, in fact,
Dropped ciphering, and stated their ages exact.
(If you went through that long computation again,
You'd find those girls just the same age they were then.)
Then the triangles, rectangles, quadrangles too,
And other sad wrangles we had to go through;
The sines and the co-sines that at us were hurled,
Till we wished that there wasn't such a thing in the world;
These fell on our minds, like a cold winter blast,
But strengthened us much, in our march through the past.

So 'mid all these countries we marched, night and day,
And many the strange things that came in our way;
The *reasons*, that seemed from us walled, hedged, and fenced;
The roots of dead verbs, that we stumbled against;
The pitiless logic of syllogism thin,
That puzzled us where to conclude or begin;

Rough notes of philosophy, harder than sweet,
That pained our teeth, ere we cracked through to the meat;
Our fright when "Analogy" round us careened,
And made Joseph Butler show up like a fiend;
The chemistry that in our minds somewhat sank,
And showed us what queer things we ate, breathed, and drank;
Zoology, where 'twas laboriously shown
That man isn't the only queer animal known;
We studied the rocks—rugged children of flame—
And sweet-scented flowers, and the fields whence they came.
Then our innocent pastimes we cannot forget,
Though some not the sensiblest mirth ever met;
And most of them—now that vacation grows long—
Seem rather uncalled for, if not rather wrong.
The old standard jokes that young blood keeps to spare,
Such as borrowing wagons to lend to the air,
And sampling much fruit—alas! stolen and sweet!
To learn if 'twas fit for the owner to eat;
And making strange brutes go to college by force—
These all seem a part of the regular course.
If from such foolish pranks, we have garnered the truth
That blood frisks and glows, when 'tis seasoned with youth,
That young nerves with life and with mischief must thrill,
And youth may be gay, and have principle still,
If we that experience give a kind use,
And form for the faults of the young, an excuse,
And not at each bubble of sport stand aghast—
Our fun bore some fruit as we marched through the past.

But memory is wide; and remains the abode
Of the girls and the boys that we left on the road!
They started off with us, their hopes were as bright
As any of ours—and their spirits as light;
Their efforts were brave, and their motives were good;
And they made the long march just as well as they could.
These gold days of June, each a floral surprise,
Gave a thrill to their hearts, and a gleam to their eyes;
The meadows that mantle yon valley's cool breast,
To them, as to us, were the symbols of rest;

By them as by us the fresh hill-sides were seen,
When corn-fields were tossing their ribbons of green;
For them the wide grain waved its flags richly free,
And promised fruition, in days soon to be;
For them faithful hands gave a clasp that was true,
And proud kindred hearts kept their triumphs in view;
They marched by our side, with no burden of dread—
They saw not the grave, just a few steps ahead;
They looked for the time, when sweet blessings would grow
From the rich earthly truths they had struggled to know;
But too weary the march, or too heavy the load;
And they laid down their armor and died on the road.
Whatever the splendors and joys of to-day,
Whatever the flowers that may flash in our way,
Whatever our joy at assembling once more,
Though God in his love grant the same o'er and o'er,
We will always remember, with sweet love bestowed,
The names of those comrades who fell on the road.
The flags of our triumphs shall droop at half mast,
For those whom the future claimed out of the past!

Not as youths now we meet, but grave women and men;
'Mid bright summer days, we must soon part again.
We know not the future, or what hands our own
May clasp, when another half decade is flown;
Our efforts may yet for a season be told
(For we're not so distressing, confoundedly old;
The crows may have stood at the edge of our eyes,
And left some tracks there that we haven't learned to prize;
The frost in our hair may be carelessly flung;
But our minds and our hearts and our souls may be young),
Still, grass-stalks, e'en now, may have lifted their heads,
That may die of the spades that will make our last beds;
But whatever our fate—to enjoy or endure—
To quote from great Webster, "The past is secure;"
So I would to-night move a vote of warm thanks,
To the living and dead who commanded our ranks;
To our enemies, who, in their short busy stay,
Did all that they could, to encumber our way;

Who postured and crouched in their poisonous slime,
Becoming step-ladders, on which we could climb;
Who told our worst faults, and then lied themselves hoarse,
And spurred us along with their tongues, in our course;
Who lived—low-conceived, intellectual moles—
"Next door to" our bodies—but not to our souls.
The rattle-snake, viper, and toad have a use,
And so has the vile tongue that rots with abuse.
A thank to the friends who looked high for our mark,
And lighted the way when 'twas dreary and dark;
For he that has groped through the fog of despair,
'Till he fought his way out to the light and the air,
Has one thing he never forgets, you will find;
And that's the first help of a friend that is kind.
Do you think, O true friend! who for e'en a short while,
Have helped a young student with deed, word, or smile,
That his memory, howe'er distracted or vexed,
Will drop out your name, in this world, or the next?
Among the good angels of earth you are classed,
You who helped us along in our way through the past!

Forward march! though that past lies in burial lands,
We must toil in the future, with heads, hearts, and hands;
Forward march! is the order that comes from on high,
And rules the great college that graces the sky!
They say Art is long, and they say very true;
But so, by-the-way, is Eternity, too!
No study to-day gets our effort and love,
But has its completion in text-books above;
No work over which the clouds struggle and beat,
But finished may be, with the clouds 'neath our feet;
Then with eyes upon Earth, but with hearts forward cast,
We will thank happy Heaven for our march through the past!

THAT DAY WE GRADUATED.

We've had *some* first-class fruitage, boys,
'Mid all the bad pears in our baskets,
And there are several jewelled toys
In Memory's queer, old-fashioned caskets;
Where silver morning bells will chime
Some certain tones that ne'er were mated,
From that unprecedented time—
That grand old day, we graduated!

It was a sheaf of hopes and fears;
A fate that came, close covered, to us;
It was the last day of four years
That were to build up or undo us;
The hour we wished and dreaded most,
From which we shrunk, for which we waited;
That inward fear and outward boast—
That fine old day we graduated!

A thousand heads and hearts were there,
With more or less discernment gifted;
Our enemies with hopeful stare,
Our friends with look of kindness lifted.
We saw gay chaplets, wondering whom
To crown their brilliant lives were fated;
Bouquets looked puzzled 'mid their bloom,
That fragrant day we graduated!

And Beauty held a precious prize
Of smiles for our intense oblations,
And looked from many-colored eyes
Made quizzical by old flirtations;

And Learning glanced us through and through,
With cold astuteness that we hated;
We knew how much we never knew,
That trying day we graduated!

We rose, with super-student care,
Brimful of fear and information;
We had about ten minutes there
To put four years in one oration.
A thousand judgments on our lives
From that important hour were dated:
How queer, that one of us survives
That fateful day we graduated!

How all the sad, uneasy past
Was wrenched from History's possession,
In cartridges of periods cast,
And fired in rounds of quick succession!
Right's winsome look, Wrong's loathsome shape,
Were unequivocally stated;
And lucky that which could escape
Us all—that day we graduated!

And when our guns were at full play,
As o'er the creaking stage we hauled them,
Some first-class words got strayed away,
And would not come back when we called them;
We had to grope and stumble round,
Just where our style was most inflated:
Humility and nerve, we found,
Were trumps, that day we graduated!

Ah me! it all was bitter-sweet—
That time of music, flowers, and splendor;
The future life we marched to meet,
The past, with memories rich and tender.
A sombre fragrance filled the air—
A mournful joy ne'er duplicated;

Both night and morning lingered there,
That changeful day we graduated!

And when "Good-bye" came, grimly sure,
And handed us our hands at parting,
We saw on what a lonely tour
Of out-door effort we were starting;
We who had wrangled, schemed, and fought,
As dear old friends each other rated;
Love twined about us, as it ought,
That solemn day we graduated!

Poems of Sorrow and Death.

THE BURNING OF CHICAGO.

I.

'Twas night in the beautiful city,
The famous and wonderful city,
The proud and magnificent city,
The Queen of the North and the West.

The riches of nations were gathered in wondrous and plentiful store;
The swift-speeding bearers of Commerce were waiting on river and shore;
The great staring walls towered skyward, with visage undaunted and bold,
And said, "We are ready, O Winter! come on with your hunger and cold!
Sweep down with your storms from the northward! come out from your ice-guarded lair!
Our larders have food for a nation! our wardrobes have clothing to spare!
For off from the corn-bladed prairies, and out from the valleys and hills,
The farmer has swept us his harvests, the miller has emptied his mills;
And here, in the lap of our city, the treasures of autumn shall rest,
In golden-crowned, glorious Chicago, the Queen of the North and the West!"

II.

'Twas night in the church-guarded city,
The temple and altar-decked city,
The turreted, spire-adorned city,
The Queen of the North and the West.

And out from the beautiful temples that wealth in its fullness had made,
And out from the haunts that were humble, where Poverty peacefully prayed,
Where praises and thanks had been offered to Him where they rightly belonged,
In peacefulness quietly homeward the worshiping multitude thronged.

The Pharisee, laden with riches and jewelry, costly and rare,
Who proudly deigned thanks to Jehovah he was not as other men are:
The penitent, crushed in his weakness, and laden with pain and with sin;
The outcast who yearningly waited to hear the glad bidding, "Come in;"
And thus went they quietly homeward, with sins and omissions confessed,
In spire-adorned, templed Chicago, the Queen of the North and the West.

III.

'Twas night in the sin-burdened city,
The turbulent, vice-laden city,
The sin-compassed, rogue-haunted city,
Though Queen of the North and the West.

And low in their caves of pollution great beasts of humanity growled;
And over his money-strewn table the gambler bent fiercely, and scowled;
And men with no seeming of manhood, with countenance flaming and fell,
Drank deep from the fire-laden fountains that spring from the rivers of hell;
And men with no seeming of manhood, who dreaded the coming of day,
Prowled, cat-like, for blood-purchased plunder from men who were better than they;
And men with no seeming of manhood, whose dearest-craved glory was shame,
Whose joys were the sorrows of others, whose harvests were acres of flame,
Slunk, whispering and low, in their corners, with bowie and pistol tight-pressed,
In rogue-haunted, sin-cursed Chicago, though Queen of the North and the West.

IV.

'Twas night in the elegant city,
The rich and voluptuous city,
The beauty-thronged, mansion-decked city,
Gay Queen of the North and the West.

And childhood was placidly resting in slumber untroubled and deep;
And softly the mother was fondling her innocent baby to sleep;
And maidens were dreaming of pleasures and triumphs the future should show,
And scanning the brightness and glory of joys they were never to know;
And firesides were cheerful and happy, and Comfort smiled sweetly around;
But grim Desolation and Ruin looked into the window and frowned.
And pitying angels looked downward, and gazed on their loved ones below,
And longed to reach forth a deliverance, and yearned to beat backward the foe;
But Pleasure and Comfort were reigning, nor danger was spoken or guessed,
In beautiful, golden Chicago, gay Queen of the North and the West.

v.

Then up in the streets of the city,
The careless and negligent city,
The soon to be sacrificed city,
Doomed Queen of the North and the West,
Crept, softly and slyly, so tiny it hardly was worthy the name,
Crept, slowly and soft through the rubbish, a radiant serpent of flame.
The South-wind and West-wind came shrieking, "Rouse up in your strength and your ire!
For many a year they have chained you, and crushed you, O demon of fire!
For many a year they have bound you, and made you their servant and slave!
Now, rouse you, and dig for this city a fiery and desolate grave!
Freight heavy with grief and with wailing her world-scattered pride and renown!
Charge straight on her mansions of splendor, and battle her battlements down!
And we, the strong South-wind and West-wind, with thrice-doubled fury possessed,
Will sweep with you over this city, this Queen of the North and the West!"

VI.

Then straight at the great, quiet city,
The strong and o'erconfident city,
The ruined and tempest-tossed city,
Doomed Queen of the North and the West,
The Fire-devil rallied his legions, and speeded them forth on the wind,
With tinder and treasures before him, with ruins and tempests behind.
The tenement crushed 'neath his footstep, the mansion oped wide at his knock;
And walls that had frowned him defiance, they trembled and fell with a shock;
And down on the hot, smoking house-tops came raining a deluge of fire;
And serpents of flame writhed and clambered, and twisted on steeple and spire;
And beautiful, glorious Chicago, the city of riches and fame,
Was swept by a storm of destruction, was flooded by billows of flame.
The Fire-king loomed high in his glory, with crimson and flame-streaming crest,
And grinned his fierce scorn on Chicago, doomed Queen of the North and the West.

VII.

Then swiftly the quick-breathing city,
The fearful and panic-struck city,
The startled and fire-deluged city,
Rushed back from the South and the West.
And loudly the fire-bells were clanging, and ringing their funeral notes;
And loudly wild accents of terror came pealing from thousands of throats;
And loud was the wagon's deep rumbling, and loud the wheel's clatter and creak;
And loud was the calling for succor from those who were sightless and weak;
And loud were the hoofs of the horses, and loud was the tramping of feet;
And loud was the gale's ceaseless howling through fire-lighted alley and street;

"AND LOUDLY WILD ACCENTS OF TERROR CAME PEALING FROM THOUSANDS OF THROATS."

But louder, yet louder, the crashing of roofs and of walls as they fell;
And louder, yet louder, the roaring that told of the coming of hell.
The Fire-king threw back his black mantle from off his great blood-dappled breast,
And sneered in the face of Chicago, the Queen of the North and the West.

VIII.

And there, in the terrible city,
The panic-struck, terror-crazed city,
The flying and flame-pursued city,
The torch of the North and the West,
A beautiful maiden lay moaning, as many a day she had lain,
In fetters of wearisome weakness, and throbbings of pitiful pain.
The amorous Fire-king came to her—he breathed his hot breath on her cheek;
She fled from his touch, but he caught her, and held her, all pulseless and weak.
The Fire-king he caught her and held her, in warm and unyielding embrace;
He wrapped her about in his vestments, he pressed his hot lips to her face;
Then, sated and palled with his triumph, he scornfully flung her away,
And, blackened and crushed in the ruins, unknown and uncoffined, she lay—
Lay, blackened and crushed by the Fire-king, in ruined and desolate rest,
Like ravished and ruined Chicago, the Queen of the North and the West.

IX.

'Twas morn in the desolate city,
The ragged and ruin-heaped city,
The homeless and hot-smoking city,
The grief of the North and the West.
But down from the West came the bidding, "O Queen, lift in courage thy head!
Thy friends and thy neighbors awaken, and hasten, with raiment and bread."

And up from the South came the bidding, "Cheer up, fairest Queen of the Lakes!
For comfort and aid shall be coming from out our savannas and brakes!"
And down from the North came the bidding, "O city, be hopeful of cheer!
We've somewhat to spare for thy sufferers, for all of our suffering here!"
And up from the East came the bidding, "O city, be dauntless and bold!
Look hither for food and for raiment—look hither for credit and gold!"
And all through the world went the bidding, "Bring hither your choicest and best,
For weary and hungry Chicago, sad Queen of the North and the West!"

X.

O crushed but invincible city!
O broken but fast-rising city!
O glorious and unconquered city,
Still Queen of the North and the West!

The long, golden years of the future, with treasures increasing and rare,
Shall glisten upon thy rich garments, shall twine in the folds of thy hair!
From out the black heaps of thy ruins new columns of beauty shall rise,
And glittering domes shall fling grandly our nation's proud flag to the skies!
From off thy wide prairies of splendor the treasures of autumn shall pour,
The breezes shall sweep from the northward, and hurry the ships to thy shore!
For Heaven will look downward in mercy on those who've passed under the rod,
And happ'ly again they will prosper, and bask in the blessings of God.
Once more thou shalt stand mid the cities, by prosperous breezes caressed,
O grand and unconquered Chicago, still Queen of the North and the West!

THE RAILROAD HOLOCAUST.

[New Hamburg, N. Y., February, 1871.]

Over the length of the beaten track,
Into the darkness deep and black,
Heavy and fast
As a mountain blast,
With scream of whistle and clang of gong,
The great train rattled and thundered along.

Travelers, cushioned and sheltered, sat,
Passing the time with doze and chat;
Thinking of naught
With danger fraught;
Whiling the hours with whim and song,
As the great train rattled and thundered along.

Covered and still the sleepers lay,
Lost to the dangers of the way;
Wandering back,
Adown life's track,
A thousand dreamy scenes among;
And the great train rattled and thundered along.

Heavily breathed the man of care;
Lightly slept the maiden fair;
And the mother pressed
Unto her breast
Her beautiful babes, with yearning strong;
And the great train rattled and thundered along.

Shading his eyes with his brawny hand,
Danger ahead the driver scanned;
And he turned the steam;
For the red light's gleam

Flashed warning to him there was something wrong;
But the great train rattled and thundered along.

"Down the brakes!" rang the driver's shout:
"Down the brakes!" sang the whistle out:
But the speed was high,
And the danger nigh,
And Death was waiting to build his pyre;
And the train dashed into a river of fire.

Into the night the red flames gleamed:
High they leaped and crackled and streamed:
And the great train loomed,
Like a monster doomed,
In the midst of the flames and their ruthless ire—
In the murderous tide of a river of fire.

Roused the sleeper within his bed:
A crash, a plunge, and a gleam of red,
And the sweltering heat
Of his winding-sheet
Clung round his form, with an agony dire:
He moaned and died in a river of fire.

And they who were spared from the fearful death,
Thanked God for life, with quickened breath,
And groaned that too late,
From a terrible fate
To rescue their comrades was their desire,
Ere they sunk in a river of death and fire.

Pity for them who, helpless, died,
And sunk in the river's merciless tide:
And blessings infold
The driver bold,
Who, daring for honor, and not for hire,
Went down with his train in the river of fire.

SHIP "CITY OF BOSTON."

"We only know she sailed away,
And ne'er was heard of more."

WAVES of the ocean that thunder and roar,
Where is the ship that we sent from our shore?
Tell, as ye dash on the quivering strand,
Where is the crew that comes never to land?
Where are the hearts that, unfearing and gay,
Broke from the clasp of affection away?

Where are the faces that, smiling and bright,
Sailed for the death-darkened regions of night?
Waves of the ocean, that thunder and roar,
Where is the ship that we sent from our shore?

Storms of the ocean, that bellow and sweep,
Where are the friends that went forth on the deep?
Where are the faces ye paled with your sneer?
Where are the hearts ye have frozen with fear?

Where is the maiden, young, tender, and fair?
Where is the grandsire, of silvery hair?
Where is the glory of womanhood's time?
Where the warm blood of man's vigor and prime?
Storms of the ocean, that bellow and pour,
Where is the ship that we sent from our shore?

Birds of the ocean, that scream through the gale,
What have ye seen of a wind-beaten sail?
Perched ye for rest on the shivering mast,
Beaten, and shattered, and bent by the blast?
Heard ye the storm-threatened mariner's plea,
Birds of the bitter and treacherous sea?
Heard ye no message to carry away
Home to the hearts that are yearning to-day?
Birds of the ocean, that hover and soar,
Where is the ship that we sent from our shore?

Depths of the ocean, that fathomless lie,
Where is the crew that no more cometh nigh?
What of the guests that so silently sleep
Low in thy chambers, relentlessly deep?
Cold is the couch they have haplessly won;
Long is the night they have entered upon;
Still must they sleep till the trumpet o'erhead
Summons the sea to uncover its dead.
Depths of the ocean, with treasures in store,
Where is the ship that we sent from our shore?

GONE BEFORE.

I.

PULL up the window-lattice, Jane, and raise me in my bed,
And trim my beard, and brush my hair, and from this covering free me,
And brace me back against the wall, and raise my aching head,
And make me trim, for one I love is coming here to see me;
Or if she do not see me, Jane, 'twill be that her dear eyes
Are shut as ne'er they shut before, in all of their reposing;
For never yet my lowest word has failed of kind replies,
And ever still my lightest touch has burst her eyelids' closing;
So let her come to me.

They say she's coming in her sleep—a sleep they can not break;
Ay, let them call, and let them weep, in dull and droning fashion!
Her ear may hear their doleful tones an age and never wake;
But let me pour into its depth my words of burning passion!
Ay, let my hot and yearning lips, that long have yearned in vain,
But press her pure and sacred cheek, and wander in her tresses·
And let my tears no more be lost, but on her forehead rain,
And she will rise and pity me, and soothe me with caresses;
So let her come to me.

O silver-crested days agone, that wove us in one heart!
O golden future years, that urged our hands to clasp in striving!
There is not that in earth or sky can hold us two apart;
And I of her, and she of me, not long may know depriving!
So bring her here, where I have long in absence pining lain,
While on my fevered weakness crashed the castles of our building;

And once together, all the woe and weary throbs of pain
That strove to cloud our happiness shall be its present gilding;
So let her come to me.

II.

They brought her me—they brought her me—they bore her to my bed;
And first I marked her coffin's form, and saw its jewels glisten.
I talked to her, I wept to her, but she was cold and dead;
I prayed to her, and then I knew she was not here to listen.
For Death had wooed and won my love, and carried her away.
How could she know my trusting heart, and then so sadly grieve me!
Her hand was his, her cheek was his, her lips of ashen gray;
Her heart was never yet for him, however she might leave me;
Her heart was e'er for me.

O waves that well had sunk my life, sweep back to me again!
I will not fight your coming now, or flee from your pursuing!
But bear me, beat me, dash me to the land of Death, and then
I'll find the love Death stole from me, and scorn him with my wooing!
Oh, I will light his gloomy orbs with jealous, mad surprise;
Oh, I will crush his pride, e'en with the lack of my endeavor;
The while I boldly bear away, from underneath his eyes,
The soul that God had made for me—to lose no more forever;
Ay, she will go with me.

Pull down the window-lattice, Jane, and turn me in my bed,
And not until the set of sun be anxious for my waking;
And ere that hour a robe of light above me shall be spread,
And darkness here shall show me there the morn that now is breaking.
And in one grave let us be laid—my truant love and me—
And side by side shall rest the hearts that once were one in beating;
And soon together and for aye our wedded souls shall be,
And never cloud shall dim again the brightness of our meeting,
Where now she waits for me.

THE LITTLE SLEEPER.

THERE is mourning in the cottage as the twilight shadows fall,
For a little rose-wood coffin has been brought into the hall,
And a little pallid sleeper,
In a slumber colder, deeper
Than the days of life could give her, in its narrow borders lies,
With the sweet and changeful lustre ever faded from her eyes.

Since the morning of her coming, but a score of suns had set,
And the strangeness of the dawning of her life is with her yet;
And the dainty lips asunder
Are a little pressed with wonder,
And her smiling bears the traces of a shadow of surprise;
But the wondering mind that made it looks no more from out her eyes.

'Twas a soul upon a journey, and was lost upon its way;
'Twas a flash of light from heaven on a tiny piece of clay;
'Twas more timid, and yet bolder,
It was younger, and yet older,
It was weaker, and yet stronger, than this little human guise,
With the strange unearthly lustre ever faded from its eyes.

They will bury her the morrow; they will mourn her as she died;
I will bury her the morrow, and another by her side;
For the raven hair, but started,
Soon a maiden would have parted,
Full of fitful joy and sorrow—gladly gay and sadly wise;
With a dash of worldly mischief in her deep and changeful eyes.

I will bury her the morrow, and another by her side:
It shall be a wife and mother, full of love and care and pride;
Full of hope, and of misgiving;
Of the joys and griefs of living;

Of the pains of others' being, and the tears of others' cries;
With the love of God encompassed in her smiling, weeping eyes.

I will bury on the morrow, too, a grandame, wrinkled, old;
One whose pleasures of the present were the joys that had been told;
I will bury one whose blessing
Was the transport of caressing
Every joy that she had buried—every lost and broken prize;
With a gleam of heaven-expected, in her dim and longing eyes.

I will joy for her to-morrow, as I see her compassed in;
For the lips now pure and holy might be some time stained with sin;
And the brow now white and stainless,
And the heart now light and painless,
Might have throbbed with guilty passion, and with sin-encumbered sighs
Might have surged the sea of brightness in the sweet and changeful eyes

Let them bury her to-morrow—let them treasure her away;
Let the soul go back to heaven, and the body back to clay;
Let the future grief here hidden,
Let the happiness forbidden,
Be for evermore forgotten, and be buried as it dies;
And an angel let us see her, with our sad and weeping eyes.

'TIS SNOWING.

FIRST VOICE.

Hurra! 'tis snowing!
On street and house-roof, gently cast,
The falling flakes come thick and fast;
They wheel and curve from giddy height,
And speck the chilly air with white!
Come on, come on, you light-robed storm!
My fire within is blithe and warm,
And brightly glowing!
My robes are thick, my sledge is gay;
My champing steeds impatient neigh;
My silver-sounding bells are clear,
With music for the muffled ear;
And she within—my queenly bride—
Shall sit right gayly by my side;
Hurra! 'tis snowing!

SECOND VOICE.

Good God! 'tis snowing!
From out the dull and leaden clouds,
The surly storm impatient crowds;
It beats against my fragile door,
It creeps across my cheerless floor;
And through my pantry, void of fare,
And o'er my hearth, so cold and bare,
The wind is blowing;
And she who rests her weary head
Upon our hard and scanty bed,
Prays hopefully, but hopeless still,
For bright spring days and whip-poor-will;

The damp of death is at her brow,
The frost is at her feet; and now
'Tis drearily snowing.

FIRST VOICE.

Hurra! 'tis snowing!
Snow on! ye can not stop our ride,
As o'er the white-paved road we glide:
Past forest trees thick draped with snow,
Past white-thatched houses, quaint and low;
Past rich-stored barn and stately herd,
Past well-filled sleigh and kindly word,
Right gayly going!
Snow on! for when our ride is o'er,
And once again we reach the door,
Our well-filled larder shall provide,
Our cellar-doors shall open wide;
And while without 'tis cold and drear,
Within, our board shall smile with cheer.
Although 'tis snowing!

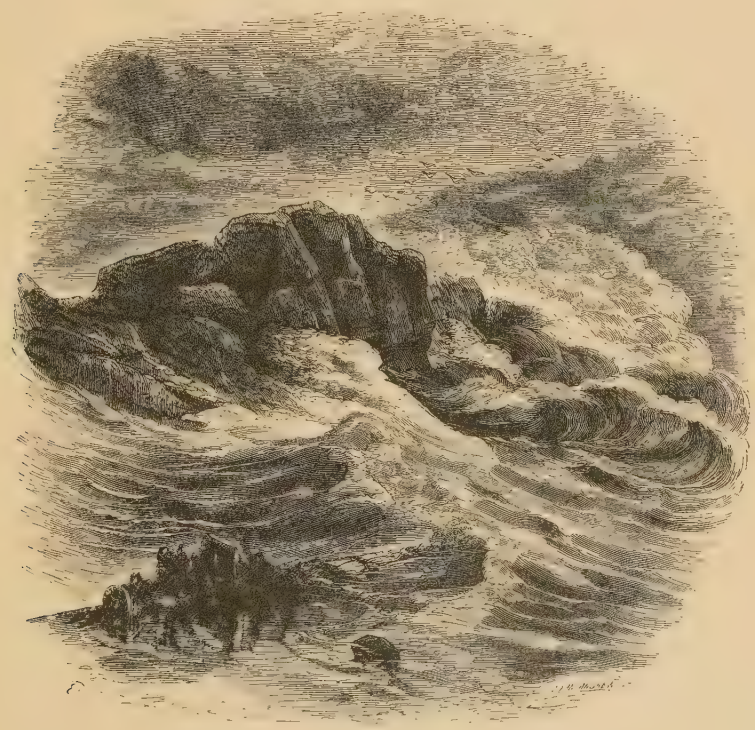
SECOND VOICE.

Good God! 'tis snowing!
Rough men now bear, with hurried tread,
My pauper wife unto her bed;
And while, all crushed, but unresigned,
I cringe and follow close behind,
And while these scalding, bitter tears—
The first that stain my manhood years—
Are freely flowing,
Her waiting grave is open wide,
And into it the snow-flakes glide.
A mattress for her couch they wreathe:
And snow above, and snow beneath,
Must be the bed of her who prayed
The sun might shine where she was laid;
And still 'tis snowing!

Poems of Hope.

SOME TIME.

O STRONG and terrible Ocean,
O grand and glorious Ocean,
O restless, stormy Ocean, a million fathoms o'er!
When never an eye was near thee to view thy turbulent glory,
When never an ear to hear thee relate thy endless story,



What didst thou then, O Ocean? Didst toss thy foam in air,
With never a bark to fear thee, and never a soul to dare?

"Oh, I was the self-same Ocean,
The same majestic Ocean,
The strong and terrible Ocean, with rock-embattled shore;
I threw my fleecy blanket up over my shoulders bare,
I raised my head in triumph, and tossed my grizzled hair;
For I knew that some time—some time—
White-robed ships would venture from out of the placid bay,
Forth to my heaving bosom, my lawful pride or prey;
I knew that some time—some time—
Lordly men and maidens my servile guests would be,
And hearts of sternest courage would falter and bend to me."

O deep and solemn Forest,
O sadly whispering Forest,
O lonely moaning Forest, that murmureth evermore!
When never a footstep wandered across thy sheltered meadows,
When never a wild bird squandered his music 'mid thy shadows,
What didst thou then, O Forest? Didst robe thyself in green,
And pride thyself in beauty the while to be unseen?
"Oh, I was the self-same Forest,
The same low-whispering Forest,
The softly murmuring Forest, and all of my beauties wore.
I dressed myself in splendor all through the lonely hours;
I twined the vines around me, and covered my lap with flowers;
For I knew that some time—some time—
Birds of beautiful plumage would flit and nestle here;
Songs of marvelous sweetness would charm my listening ear;
I knew that some time—some time—
Lovers would gayly wander 'neath my protecting boughs,
And into the ear of my silence would whisper holy vows."

O fair and beautiful Maiden,
O pure and winsome Maiden,
O grand and peerless Maiden, created to adore!
When no love came to woo thee that won thy own love-treasure,
When never a heart came to thee thy own heart-wealth could measure,
What didst thou then, O Maiden? Didst smile as thou smilest now,
With ne'er the kiss of a lover upon thy snow-white brow?

"Oh, I was the self-same Maiden,
The simple and trusting Maiden,
The happy and careless Maiden, with all of my love in store.
I gayly twined my tresses, and cheerfully went my way;
I took no thought of the morrow, and cared for the cares of the day;
For I knew that some time—some time—
Into the path of my being the Love of my life would glide,
And we by the gates of heaven would wander side by side."

THE GOOD OF THE FUTURE.

WHY is the mire in the trodden street,
And the dark stream by the sewer borne,
Spurned from even under our feet,
Grudged by us e'en the look of scorn?
There is fresh grass in its gloom—
There are sweetness and bloom;
There is pulse for men to eat—
There are golden acres of wheat.
But so it is, and hath ever been:
The good of the future is e'er unseen.

Why is the mud of humanity spurned
E'en from the tread of the passer-by?
Why is the look of pity turned
From the bare feet and the downcast eye?
There is virtue yet to spring
From this poor trodden thing;
There are germs of godlike power
In the trials of this hour;
But so it is, and hath ever been:
The man of the future is e'er unseen.

THE JOYS THAT ARE LEFT.

If the sun have been gone while we deemed it might shine;
If the day steal away with no hope-bearing sign;
If the night, with no sight of its stars or its moon,
But such clouds as it hath, closes down on our path over-dark and o'er soon:

If a voice we rejoice in its sweetness to hear,
Breathe a strain for our pain that glides back to our ear;
If a friend mark the end of a page that was bright,
Without pretext or need, by some reptile-like deed that coils plain in our sight;

If life's charms in our arms grow a-tired and take wing;
If the flowers that are ours turn to nettles and sting;
If the home sink in gloom that we labored to save,
And the garden we trained, when its best bloom is gained, be enriched by a grave;

Shall we deem that life's dream is a toil and a snare?
Shall we lie down and die on the couch of despair?
Shall we throw needless woe on our sad heart bereft?
Or, grown tearfully wise, look with pain-chastened eyes at the joys that are left?

For the tree that we see on the landscape so fair,
When we hie to it nigh, may be fruitless and bare;
While the vine that doth twine 'neath the blades of the grass,
With sweet nourishment rife, holds the chalice of life toward our lips as we pass.

So with hope let us grope for what joys we may find;
Let not fears, let not tears make us heedless or blind;
Let us think, while we drink the sweet pleasures that are,
That in sea or in ground many gems may be found that outdazzle the star.

There be deeds may fill needs we have suffered in vain,
There be smiles whose pure wiles may yet banish our pain;
And the heaven to us given may be found ere we die;
For God's glory and grace, and His great holy place, are not all in the sky.

WHEN MY SHIP WENT DOWN.

I.

Sank a palace in the sea,
  When my ship went down;
Friends whose hearts were gold to me—
Gifts that ne'er again can be—
  'Neath the waters brown.
There you lie, O Ship, to-day,
In the sand-bar stiff and gray!
You who proudly sailed away
  From the splendid town.

II.

Now the ocean's bitter cup
  Meets your trembling lip;
Now on deathly woes you sup;
And your humbled pride looks up
  From Disaster's grip.
Ruin's nets around you weave;
But I have no time to grieve;
I will promptly, I believe,
  Build another ship.

TO THE CARLETON CIRCLE

(Of Hudson, Michigan: the Author's native town)

[In response to their Request for a Word of Greeting at their Annual Reunion, Monday Evening, July 26, 1886.]

Sometimes there comes to me a word of cheer,
From yonder region where the sun goes down;
Where I have often watched him disappear,
And leave awhile the jewels of his crown.
That voice glides over Erie's stormy edge—
It climbs the Alleghanies' rugged ledge,
And tarries not for dale or mountain crest,
Till it makes music in my own home-nest.

It says, "We would be better, wiser, truer,
Each day we live; the best that is in us,
We aim to nourish, that it may endure,
And pray that God will help our striving thus.
With reason-builded curiousness we yearn
The depths of history's changing tides to learn;
The weird discoveries that proud science made,
And the pen's song—we ask them all for aid."

The old town marches eastward to the sea;
Roofs, windows, belfries, door-stones—all are here;
Again its busy streets encompass me—
Their outlines never looked so full and clear.
Shop, factory, office, church and clattering mill;
The trim red school-house smiling from the hill;
The mimic river with its placid tide,
The quaint old graveyard lingering by its side;

And all the home-made dramas of the past,
  Are acted over with a mellower grace;
The wedding-bells that rang so loud and fast—
  The sombre funeral, with its village pace;
The young full-blooded boys that roamed the street;
The old men Death was walking out to meet;
The good grandames whose gossip whipped the hours;
The girls with faces stolen from the flowers;

Those forms I knew, in reappearing hosts,
  Crowd every corner, as on gala days;
They throng the mind—these silent memory-ghosts,
  Then sadly smile, and vanish from the gaze.
And some I loved beyond all words' control,
And some I hated with an uncurbed soul
(For he who likes this world, and means to stay,
Must yearn, and toil, and love, and *fight* his way).

All this was for the best; and now in love
  We look at those who once awakened ire;
If we but lift our hearts and souls above,
  The crushing waves will only lift us higher.
Ere you once more return to shadow-land,
Dead friend—dead foe—I clasp you by the hand!
It may be now that you on whom I call,
Look at the earth-feuds as exceeding small!

And now there float to me some words of cheer,
  From yonder region where the sun goes down;
From kindred souls, whose presence would be dear—
  From the *loved living* of my native town!
To prove once more an old truth it may serve,
That God e'er gives men more than they deserve,
That 'mid the struggles of your lofty aim,
You look this way and call to me by name.

Ah, would that I were worthy of the task,
  To see that all your diamonds were saved!

'Tis the best joy that any one can ask—
To give to others what himself has craved.
Whoe'er can teach you life's most brilliant art,
To make the most of body, mind, and heart—
Will feel that fact, his inmost being bless,
More than the costliest jewels of success!

Sometimes there comes a blessed word of cheer
From yonder region where the sun shines high;
It brings a joy, it casts out every fear;
It is the motto of th' eternal sky!
Be true, be brave, be faithful; let your heart
With worldly joys and sorrows take their part;
While brain and soul cling to the gleaming cars
Whose goal is Heaven—whose stations are the stars.

The Sanctum King.

THE SANCTUM KING.

[Read at the Twenty-sixth Annual Convention of the New York Press Association, at Jamestown, N. Y., June 7, 1882.]

If one who, midst alternate joy and care,
Has occupied an editorial chair,
Has solved some mysteries that its methods take,
And learned how easy papers are to make,
Has undergone from friends much mental aid,
And wondered where on earth they learned his trade,
Has heard from them how papers should be run,
How things they never have to do, are done,
Has wrestled, in a match he could not shirk,
With the world, flesh, and—lad of general work—
But now, grown poor, has left for some time-space,
The hard, but weirdly fascinating place—
If such an one may use, not seeming free,
The editorial and fraternal "We,"
And, speaking to this band without offense,
May use his us-ship in the present tense,
Then, let us, with your kind permission, sing
A note or two about The Sanctum King.

But first the question, who this king of fame?
Whence comes his power, and what may be his name?
With modesty peculiar to the race,
No editor pretends to fill that place;
For editors, be rulers as they will,
Are greatly ruled by their surroundings still;
All men and things, to some extent, control
The journalist's intent and nervous soul.
Influences press round him, in a host;
So what we seek, is, That which rules him most;

What of all men and things that 'gainst him press,
Bears most upon his failure or success?
Upon this ground, what man, or beast, or thing,
Can claim the title of The Sanctum King?

Is it the Pen? O Pen! we hear thy praise,
Wherever Mind has walked its devious ways!
Thought has been born, in every land and age
Where thy thin lips have kissed the virgin page!
'Twas thee Dan Chaucer used, in time agone,
To goad the Canterbury pilgrims on;
From thee Ben Jonson filled with gold the air,
And made his name a jewel rich and "rare;"
Of thee The Shakespeare, in his soul sublime,
Forged for himself a sceptre, for all time;
With thee bold Milton groped, his eyes thick sealed,
And wrote his name on Heaven's own battle-field;
Thee, Robert Burns, voice of the heart's best song,
Fashioned into a bagpipe sweet and strong;
Thee, Thomas Moore—his soul to music set—
Made to an Irish harp that echoes yet;
With thee Longfellow struck a home-made lyre,
And wrote "America," in lines of fire!
Through thy sharp, quivering point, words have been given,
Out of the flaming lexicons of Heaven!
O Pen! When in the old-time school-house, we
Strove, 'neath our teacher's rod, to master thee,
And, twisting down upon some sad old desk,
With doleful air and attitude grotesque,
And with protruding tongue and beating heart,
Took our first lessons in the graphic art,
And that old copy on the paper poured,
Saying, "The Pen is mightier than the Sword,"
And then, from sudden and dynamic stroke,
The pen we leaned on, into fragments broke,
Some angel told our inexperienced youth,
That, after all, that copy told the truth!
O Pen! What if thy paper purses hold
Some coin that never came from wisdom's mould!

"WITH THE WORLD, FLESH, AND—LAD OF GENERAL WORK."

What if thou writest countless reams on reams
Of manuscript, to trouble printers' dreams!
What if thy cheap and easy-wielded prongs,
Indite each year a hundred thousand songs,
In ink of various copiousness and shade—
On every subject Earth and Heaven have made!
What if thou shovest 'neath the printer's nose,
Cords of mis-spelled, unpunctuated prose!
What if, picked from the wing of senseless goose,
Thou'rt still by that loud biped oft in use!
Thou'rt sometimes plucked from Wisdom's glittering wing;
And yet we cannot hail thee Sanctum King!

Is it The Pencil? Sad would be the lot
Of any sanctum where this help were not!
Turn, Faber, in thy half-forgotten grave,
And see the branches of thy bay-tree wave!
See Dickens, still by glory's wreaths untouched,
Pencil 'twixt first and second fingers clutched,
Transcribing, in his nervous, dashing way,
The parliamentary rubbish of the day!
Him on his rapid homeward journey see;
An omnibus for office, and his knee
Extemporized into a desk, whereon
He writes what lesser men have said and done!
See Thackeray, through English streets and vales,
Make notes and sketches for his wondrous tales;
See Bryant, sage apostle of the wood,
And quiet champion of the true and good,
Echo of every breeze's soft-blown breath,
Sweetest of all apologists of Death,
Leave the surroundings of the heath and field,
The pencil of the journalist to wield!
See Prentice, thorny genius, using it
For the electric charges of his wit;
See Saxe from mountain eyries take his flight,
His wings with editorial radiance bright;
See Whittier—angels spare him long to men!—
Whose pencil served apprentice to his pen;

See Taylor, travelling many a useful mile,
Grasp a reporter's pencil all the while;
See Holland—sweetly noble household name—
Lean on the pencil, on his way to fame;
See, bending the reporter's page above,
Artemus Ward—light laughter's dearest love!
See thousands of the loftiest of the land,
First learn to write an editorial hand!
And, Pencil, with such aids as thou canst find,
Thou'rt courted, feared, and watched, by all mankind;
They seek thy love; they wither 'neath thy hate;
With anxious hearts thy verdicts they await.
That statesman, who unflinching can withstand
His foeman's broadsides, with brave self-command,
That lawyer, who can bully at the bar
Judge, witness, jury—no odds who they are—
That doctor, who has sallied forth thro' storms,
To fight with Death, in all his moods and forms,
That general, who, when battle-banners wave,
Can spur his foaming charger toward the grave,
All these, when interviewers near them glide,
Sometimes, like startled children, run and hide.
Yes, Pencil, thou art potent in thy sting!
And yet we cannot hail thee Sanctum King.

Rise up, John Guttenberg, from lands remote,
And let us hear thy guttural German throat;
Now that the harvest that thou sowedst is ripe,
Make prominent the royal claims of Type!
Those type that rose, like treasures from the main,
Out of the deep abysses of thy brain!
Old jeweller, Heaven grant thou knowest yet,
What diamonds thine aching fingers set!
Wherever Mind once groped in halls of night,
They flashed and flared their weird electric light;
Wherever Thought has lit its streaming flame,
They spell the letters of thy awkward name!
When first the office boy assails the "case,"
With "stick" and "rule" held awkwardly in place,

When through his "copy" timidly he spells,
Thrusting his fingers knee-deep in the cells,
And draws the type forth, looking, when 'tis done,
In each one's face, to see if that's the one;
When, raising them and holding them aloof,
Ere putting them to most outrageous proof,
He drops the whole into a shapeless "pi,"
And looks at them forlornly, as they lie,
Little he knows, amid his small turmoils,
The nature of those things, 'mid which he toils!
Little he knows, as gazing still he stands,
He may have dropped an empire from his hands!
Yes, Type, thy voice is loud, for war or peace;
Its mighty influence nevermore may cease;
Unnumbered happenings from thy efforts spring;
And yet, we cannot hail thee Sanctum King!

What then strikes most our failure or success?
Is it the strong and swiftly whirling Press?
Improved by rare Ben Franklin's earliest art
(God bless his dear old sweet progressive heart!
The patron saint of printers let him stand,
Ever—in every English-speaking land!).
Is it the Press, made multiform by Hoe,
Who lives, the triumph of his brain to know,
And views his monster proudly, as it drips
Fresh news from off its tapering finger-tips?
Far can the Press its many mandates fling;
And yet we cannot hail it Sanctum King!

Who then this Sanctum King, of mighty fame?
Is it that lad of uncelestial name,
Who, like the wretch whose title he has found,
Takes all the maledictions floating round?
Who quaffs, with surly, mock-respectful stare,
The surplus blueness of the office air?
Who all our secrets in a week doth know;
Whose brain is active as his feet are slow?

Who pleads from every negligence or trick,
With tongue as agile as his hands are thick?
Who creeps the editor's seclusion near,
And yells for "copy!" in his weakest ear?
Who when on errands swiftly sent, would spurn
To embarrass you by an o'er-quick return;
And creeps along his course, when under sail,
Like an old fish-boat, beating 'gainst a gale?
Who some day, if his brilliant hopes be sound,
May mount The Great Profession's topmost round,
But who, by undue energy uncursed,
Is climbing very moderately at first?
Pity the devil! for he much endures!
He has his griefs, as well as you have yours.
If "Uncle Toby," for his good heart famed,
Pitied the one for whom the boy was named,
Then may we make allowance for the elf,
And pity this poor blundering boy himself.
The day may not be very far ahead,
When he his genius on our craft will shed;
Will all at once develop hidden worth,
And as a full-fledged editor come forth.
Let us then justice to this poor boy bring,
Call him—say—Sanctum Prince—not quite a King.

Paste-pot and scissors! raise thy sticky hands,
And make on us imperial demands!
Not over-often comes the day or hour
We're not indebted to thy magic power;
To all of us the obligation clings;
Thou art our foragers—but not our kings!

Is it that "friend," whom editors adore,
Who calls "a minute" of three hours or more,
Who occupies the easiest vacant chair,
With large amounts of time and tongue to spare?
Who opens our exchanges, one by one,
And reads our editorials ere they're done?

Who gives us items, sparkling, fresh, and new,
But ne'er, by any turn of fortune, true?
Who comments on our mode of writing makes,
And tenderly announces our mistakes?
Who occupies, with sweet, unconscious air,
Three-fourths of all the room we have to spare,
And with a cheerful, love-begetting smile,
Kills his own time, and murders us meanwhile?
Who shows us, with unnecessary pains,
The sharp things that some other sheet contains?
Who hands us every word, from far and near,
That he against our enterprise can hear?
Sweet are the consolations he can bring;
And yet we cannot call him Sanctum King!

Who then, or what, this king of mighty fame?
Whence comes his power, and what may be his name?
May we not, with some show of truthful grace,
Put The Waste Basket in that honored place?
The question 'mongst good talkers, day by day,
Should be, what is it wisest *not* to say?
The question with good workers who'd be true,
Should be, what is it wisest *not* to do?
The minister his judgment should beseech,
To know what sermons wisely *not* to preach;
The editor should study, without stint,
What articles 'tis wisest *not* to print;
And so I ask, the question home to bring—
Is The Waste Basket not The Sanctum King?
Great treasurer of literary gems!
Casket of unsuspected diadems!
Sad cemetery, where in dreamless sleep,
Some millions of bright hopes lie buried deep!
Joy to the editor, who, keen of sight,
Knows his Waste Basket how to use aright;
Who marks its prudent counsels, day by day,
And rules himself its mandates to obey!
Prints no cheap advertisement for a song,
But straight inserts them—where the things belong;

Kills those communications whose sour fruit
Would probably have been—a libel suit;
Rejects that trash his desk so often finds,
Unfit to set before his readers' minds;
And sends the scum of malice, filth and spite,
To be made into paper, pure and white!
Let The Waste Basket's countless merits ring;
But still it is not quite The Sanctum King!

So, then, if none of those of which I speak,
Is vested with the qualities we seek,
Let us once more inquire, untouched by blame,
Who is this wondrous king, of mighty fame?
List then, while plain his name to you I bring,
The Public Heart! That is The Sanctum King!

Yes, 'mid unceasing worry and turmoil,
To serve that Heart, the Editor must toil;
Under Its bidding must his efforts be;
It forms part of "the editorial We."
Why do the papers gossip, would you know?
Because—the public ear would have it so.
Our journal's not a favorite breakfast-dish,
Unless it gossips to the public wish;
And even they who call "the stuff absurd,"
Will sit and groan, and—read it every word.
Why do we thread men's motives thro' and thro'?
Because our king, The Public, tells us to!
Why do we quote the wedding chimes and hues?
Because our Queen is waiting for the news.
Why do we type on useless stories waste?
To please some portions of the public taste!
Why do we into secret haunts repair?
Because a curious public sends us there!
Why do we tell the crimes of all the lands?
Because The Public Heart their tale demands!
Why are we deep in politics immersed?
Because The Public fought and quarreled first!

"THE PUBLIC HEART'S PRIME-MINISTERS ARE WE!"

Why do we toil with all that we possess?
Because The Public Brain will take no less!
Acknowledged let our proud position be:
The Public Heart's prime-ministers are we!

Men of the Press! to us is given, indeed,
To shape the growing appetites we feed!
We must from day to day and week to week,
To elevate our Monarch's motives seek,
That he may, with an open, liberal hand,
Higher and higher things of us demand!
So let us cut our own progressive way—
So onward toil, through darkness and through day;
So let us in our labor persevere,
Unspoiled by praise—untouched by blame or fear;
Learn to distinguish, with true, patient art,
The private pocket from The Public Heart;
Learn how to guide that Heart, in every choice,
And give its noblest thoughts its purest voice!
Till so The Press The Public Heart may move,
That day by day they mutually improve:
That high and higher each the other bring,
Till God Himself shall be The Sanctum King!

Stray Stanzas.

LINES TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

[In Boston Literary World's "Welcome" Number, June 27, 1885.]

With love not even he could wake,
  Save in his fatherland,
We reach a Yankee grasp, and take
  Hosea by the hand.
With smiles of praise, that need must throng
  With sympathizing tears,
We greet our prince of prose and song,
  In his maturer years;
For words that made a shining track,
  Beyond the Atlantic foam,
We lift our hearts, and welcome back
  Our statesman to his home.

TO MONSIEUR PASTEUR.

[Upon his Discovery of Inoculation for Hydrophobia.]

O good Monsieur Pasteur! your humanized art
Has thrilled every brain, and has touched every heart;
Man's friendliest beast—by disease tortured sore,
Henceforth is a poisonous reptile no more;
Now please find a cure to our maladies when
This poor world is bitten by mad-minded men!

TO A YOUNG LADY.

[For whom two Harvard Students engaged in a Game of Fisticuffs.]

'Tis something to be sought for, O maiden archly fair—
And to be bravely fought for; but, sweet one, have a care!
The "slugger" tribe (the fact is) when business with them thrives,
Are sometimes prone to practice their art upon their wives!

DEATH OF THE RICHEST MAN.

He owned, to-day, a large and gleaming share
  Of this earth's narrow rim;
A sigh—a groan—a gesture of despair—
  The earth owned him.
The richest one of any clime or land,
  The old-time lesson taught;
A human mine of gold!—God raised His hand,
  And he had nought.

TO THE SMOTHERED MINERS.

Oh men who died in tombs,
  Away from the life of the sun,
Down in the griefs and glooms
  Of a day forever done:
The life of that senseless coal
  Will some day seek the air;
And Heaven will claim each soul
  Of your bodies buried there.

THE DEATHLESS SONG.

[Telegraphed to the John Howard Payne Obsequies at Washington, 1883.]

Although to-day with reverent tread
I may not join your throng,
My heart is with the living dead
Who wrote the deathless song.

ON A "POET"-CRITIC.

Disgruntled ——, by failure spoiled
Into a living frown,
With pens by his own "poems" spoiled,
Writes younger authors down:
Sick serpent of the growler tribes,
Your victims might do worse;
They'd rather bear your shallow gibes
Than write your dawdling verse.

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